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ABSTRACT

Past research has shown that a relatively small number of youths are responsible for a large proportion of the offenses committed by juveniles, leading juvenile justice practitioners to ask what the courts can do to intervene early to deter these youth from committing further serious delinquent acts. To answer this question, a research study was undertaken to examine, from the court's perspective, the delinqu..t careers of chronic juvenile offenders. The research involved the analysis of the court career and offense patterns of nearly 70,000 youth in Phoenix, Arizona and the state of Utah. The findings suggest that juvenile courts have an opportunity to intervene in the lives of a large percentage of youth at a time when problems are apparent and also have the authority to effect change. The finding that a youth referred to court for a second time before the age of 16 could, with a high degree of certainty, be considered a chronic offender implies that the courts should not wait until the youth has returned for the fourth or fifth time before taking strong action. This report describes the research conducted in Arizona and Utah and the findings revealed. Chapter 1 discusses the need for court career research. Chapter 2 explains the sources of juvenile court career data. Chapter 3 describes youth with juvenile court careers; chapter 4 explores the development of juvenile court careers; and chapter 5 characterizes juvenile court career types. Chapter 6 presents a summary and conclusions. The appendix explains the recoding of offense codes into reporting codes. Numerous tables display the statistical data. (NB)

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Court Careers of Juvenile Offenders

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Court Careers of Juvenile Offenders

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March 1988

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U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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Foreword

Past research has shown that a relatively small number of youths are responsible for a large proportion of the offenses committed by juveniles. This information has led many juvenile justice practitioners to ask what the courts can do to intervene early to deter these youth from committing further serious delinquent acts.

With this question in mind, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) funded a research study to examine, from the court's perspective, the delinquent careers of chronic juvenile offenders.

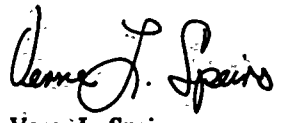
The results of this study, Court Careers of Juvenile Offenders, shed new light on old issues and point to possible changes in the way the juvenile court system handles youths.

The research, which was conducted for OJJDP by the National Center for Juvenile Justice, involved the analysis of the court careers and offense patterns of nearly 70,000 youth in Phoenix, Arizona, and the State of Utah.

The study indicates that juvenile courts have (1) an opportunity to intervene in the lives of a large percentage of youth at a time when problems are apparent and (2) the authority to effect change. Early intervention in a young offender's juvenile court career may not only halt that career but also help reduce the drain on limited court resources each time a juvenile is referred to the court.

The study's findings can help courts select appropriate supervision strategies for individual offenders and effectively allocate limited court resources.

One of our priorities at OJJDP is to publish reliable and useful information. This publication represents just one of many OJJDP efforts to disseminate timely program information to help practitioners to improve the juvenile justice system. We hope juvenile justice experts will use this information to develop programs to respond effectively to serious juvenile offenders.



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Acknowledgements

The National Juvenile Court Data Archive (NJCDA), which is supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and housed at the National Center for Juvenile Justice, collects, documents and stores the automated case records of the nation's juvenile courts. While planning this research project, the contents of the National Juvenile Court Data Archive were reviewed to determine if there were archived data sets which met the demands of the research design. The archived records of the Maricopa County Juvenile Court (the juvenile court serving Phoenix, Arizona) and the statewide Utah Juvenile Court possessed the necessary characteristics. These records were generated by information systems which support the operational, management and research needs of their courts. Consequently, the archived data are both detailed and accurate. In addition, both systems had been in existence for a long enough period of time to contain the complete court careers of a large number of youth. Before this study began, both courts granted permission to use their data in this work.

During the course of this research, questions arose about the two courts' intake, processing, and disposition procedures and the characteristics of their information systems. Many conversations ensued between the author and the courts to clarify these points and to discuss interim findings. For their cooperation and support, the author expresses his gratitude to Ernesto Garcia, Carol Burgess, Steve Stilwell, William McCarthy, and John Barrett of the Maricopa County Juvenile Court and to Michael Phillips, John McNamara, and Elma Ashley of the Utah Juvenile Court.

A project advisory committee was impaneled to review and critique the initial design of the study and the final report. For their assistance the author would like to thank Don Gottfredson, Anne Schneider, Pamela Swain, and Terence Thornberry. Freida Thomas and Lois Keck served as the grant monitors. David Farrington was asked by the author to review a draft of the final report; for his extensive comments and insightful contributions, the author is deeply grateful. Terrence Finnegan, Senior Programmer at the National Center for Juvenile Justice, constructed and managed the large data files used in this work. Finally, Nancy Tierney served as the administrative assistant throughout the project and was responsible for the design and production of this report.

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Executive Summary

In the last fifteen years the birth cohort studies conducted in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in Columbus, Ohio, and in Racine, Wisconsin have greatly enhanced our understanding of the extent and character of juvenile law-violating careers. This picture, based primarily on police contacts, describes delinquent careers from the perspective of law enforcement. However, the characteristics of delinquent careers from the juvenile court perspective may be somewhat different. Therefore, there is a need to provide a detailed description of the officially-recognized law-violating careers of youth who come before juvenile courts.

A study was undertaken to describe the prevalence, content and structure of juvenile court careers. The study analyzed the court careers of the 69,504 youth born between 1962 and 1965 who were processed by the juvenile courts in Maricopa County (Phoenix), Arizona and in the State of Utah. Both courts have original jurisdiction over youth until their eighteenth birthdays. In addition, along with the formal adjudicatory process, both courts have active intake screening and diversion programs which handle a large proportion of the referred cases informally.

Prevalence of Juvenile Court Careers

In both jurisdictions one-third of all youth born between 1962 and 1965 were referred to juvenile court at least once before their eighteenth birthday for a delinquent or a status offense. In both jurisdictions the male prevalence rate was more than double the female rate. Nearly half (46 percent) of all males and one-fifth (21 percent) of all females had a juvenile court record.

The majority of youth referred to court were referred at least once for a delinquency offense (i.e., a criminal law violation). Eighty-one percent of all court careers (85 percent of male careers and 73 percent of female careers) contained a delinquency referral. Translating these figures into prevalence rates, 28 percent of the birth cohort (39 percent of the males and 15 percent of the females) were referred to juvenile court at least once for a criminal law violation.

A high percentage of the juvenile court careers included at least one status offense referral (i.e., running away, truancy, curfew violation, incorrigibility, and underage liquor law violations). Overall, 40 percent of the court careers (38 percent of male careers and 42 percent of female careers) contained at least one status offense referral. In other words, 14 percent of the birth cohort (17 percent of the males and 9 percent of the females) were referred to court at least once for a status offense.

Content of Court Careers

Five percent of the youth referred to juvenile court were charged at some point in their careers with an index violent offense (i.e., murder, forcible rape, robbery or aggravated assault). More specifically, 3 percent of all careers included an aggravated assault referral and 2 percent a charge of robbery. Charges of forcible rape and murder were found in less than one-half of 1 percent of all careers. More than half of all court careers contained a referral for an index property offense (i.e., burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft or arson). Forty-four percent contained a referral for larceny-theft (primarily shoplifting), 14 percent a referral for burglary, 6 percent a referral for motor vehicle theft, and 1 percent of all the court careers contained a charge of arson. A drug offense

THE TEXT OF THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUES ON PAGE xii. FOLLOWED BY PAGE vii.

Who Will Be a Chronic Offender?

The probability of returning to court increased as the career lengthened. Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin (1972) found a nearly identical recidivism pattern in the Philadelphia birth cohort and labeled those with five or more police contacts [or more specifically those with more than a 72 percent probability of recidivating] as *chronic offenders*. Blumstein, Farrington, and Moitra (1985) argued that this overall recidivism pattern was actually the joint pattern of two offender types. They labeled these groups as the *desisters* (those with relatively low recidivism probabilities) and the *persisters* (those with high recidivism probabilities). They argued that the rise in the observed recidivism probabilities at each contact point reflected the changing composition of offenders at each stage of involvement, with the desisters stopping relatively early leaving a residue composed increasingly of the high-recidivism persisters. These findings have had a dramatic effect on our nation's juvenile justice policy. Many courts wait until youth have, as a result of long referral histories, proven themselves to be chronic offenders before they impose substantial sanctions, both in terms of severity and cost. The juvenile justice system must wait for the youth to recidivate again and again before the *chronic offender* evaluation can be made. Or does it?

In any study of delinquent careers many youth who appear to desist from delinquent activity simply age out of the juvenile justice system. For example, in this study, 17-year-olds were the least likely to recidivate; only 30 percent of 17-year-olds recidivated compared to at least 70 percent of those who were referred below 15 years of age. In fact, a 14-year-old with one referral was more likely to return to juvenile court than a 17-year-old with nine prior referrals. This does not imply that 17-year-olds were more likely than 14-year-olds to refrain from future law-violating behavior. What it does show is that any juvenile recidivism model based solely on the number of prior referrals oversimplifies the nature of delinquent careers by ignoring the impact of the time remaining in a juvenile career (the time until the youth's eighteenth birthday).

The following table presents the probability of recidivating at each referral point controlling for the age at referral. Notice that for all ages combined, youth with two referrals recidivated at a rate of 59 percent. However, 17-year-olds with two referrals recidivated at a rate of 27 percent and 12-year-olds with two referrals recidivated at a rate of 83 percent. Clearly the average recidivism probability of youth with two referrals is a rather meaningless statistic to a juvenile probation officer who is constructing a pre-disposition report. Similarly requiring a youth to have five referrals before classifying him as a chronic offender is unwarranted. Using the Wolfgang et al. (1972) standard of a 72 percent recidivism probability, youth falling into 53 out of the 72 table cells are chronic offenders. For example, the recidivism probabilities of all youth below the age of 16 with two referrals had recidivism probabilities of more than 72 percent. The only youth who were likely to desist (i.e., those with less than a 50 percent recidivism probability) were 15- and 16- year-olds referred for the first time and most 17-year-olds. This does not imply that the younger juveniles were more likely than older juveniles to continue their involvement in law-violating behavior. The lower juvenile recidivism rates for the older youth are a direct consequence of their aging out of the juvenile, and into the adult, justice system.

What are the implications of these findings for the juvenile court? First, the recidivism probabilities of many youth who come before the juvenile court for only the second time are very high - at the chronic offender level. If a court knows that it is likely to handle a youth again and again, the court should not delay in providing interventions and imposing sanctions. Dispositions in many court systems progress in severity and cost in small steps. However, if a court adopts the position early in a career that a youth is likely to continue the law-violating behavior and to consume much more court time and resources, the progression of court's responses could be accelerated. Earlier substantial involvement in the court careers of young (and old) juvenile offenders should

present the best opportunity for influencing future behavior by dealing with youth at a younger age when they are more amenable to juvenile court treatment.

Percentage of Youth Who Returned to Juvenile Court Controlling for Age at Referral and the Current Number of Referrals in the Career

Age at Referral	Number of Referrals									Across All Referrals
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	61%	84%	96%	97%	99%	96%	93%	94%	95%	71%
11	60%	85%	91%	92%	98%	99%	99%	96%	100%	72%
12	59%	83%	89%	97%	98%	95%	98%	96%	98%	72%
13	57%	82%	90%	93%	95%	97%	96%	98%	98%	73%
14	53%	77%	86%	91%	92%	94%	96%	95%	95%	70%
15	45%	69%	80%	84%	89%	89%	91%	93%	92%	66%
16	33%	55%	68%	73%	77%	81%	82%	83%	86%	54%
17	16%	27%	36%	41%	45%	48%	50%	53%	51%	30%
All Ages	41%	59%	67%	71%	74%	77%	77%	79%	79%	56%

Note: *The proper interpretation of the values in this table may be helped by a few examples. Seventy-seven percent of all youth whose second referral occurred at age 14 were referred again. Fifty-nine percent of all youth with two referrals had a subsequent referral to juvenile court. Seventy percent of all youth referred at age 14 were referred later for a new offense.*

Career Patterns

A developmental model of delinquency predicts that if delinquent youth are left untreated, their careers will progress from less to more serious forms of law-violating behavior (Smith and Smith, 1984; McNamara, 1977). However, many studies have found no pattern to the law-violating behavior of juveniles, finding instead that youth commit a wide range of law-violating behavior in no particular pattern. Klein (1984) characterized this as cafeteria-style behavior, which results in a broadening of the nature of the offenses found in a delinquent career but not in the average seriousness of the offenses within the career.

The present study uncovered some offense patterns in the court careers. Youth with longer careers were charged with a disproportionately large number of motor vehicle thefts, robberies, burglaries, rapes, murders, and aggravated assaults and disproportionately fewer shopliftings and underage liquor law violations. Thus, longer careers contained a disproportionate share of serious offenses, which is consistent with a developmental model of career progression. In contrast to a cafeteria-model of delinquent behavior, a developmental model predicts that within a career the probability of serious offending increases with referral number. Careers were analyzed to investigate changes in the nature of the referrals as the career lengthened. The observed patterns present a picture of officially recognized delinquency which progresses from less to more serious behaviors. This conclusion was supported by a number of findings. The first occurrence of an index violent

referral was more likely to be found toward the end of a court career. The more prior referrals in a career, the greater was the likelihood that the youth would be referred for a delinquency offense and the more likely it was to be an index violent offense.

A Typology of Juvenile Court Careers

Studies of delinquency careers often focus on specific attributes of careers: age of onset, career length, overall seriousness, the nature of the offense-to-offense transitions or changes in the types of offenses referred as the career continues. This study also investigated the overall offense composition of a juvenile court career. This was done by classifying careers into one of fifteen career types. A four-character binary code was used to summarize the types of offenses referred within a juvenile court career. The first character stands for the existence in the career of one or more referrals for an index violent offense; the second character stands for the existence of one or more referrals for an index property offense; the third for the existence of one or more referrals for a nonindex delinquency offense; and the fourth for the existence of one or more referrals for a status offense. Therefore, a career with a code of 1110 would contain one or more index violent offense referrals, one or more index property referrals, one or more nonindex delinquency referrals, and no status offense referrals. By definition this career contains at least three referrals (though it could contain many more) with the nature of the first or the last referral unknown.

Career Types and Specialization

With this background, the next table presents the career types for youth in this study ordered from the most to the least common. The three most common careers were those containing only one offense type, either only index property offenses (0100), only nonindex delinquency offenses (0010), or only status offenses (0001). This high proportion of single offense type careers is expected given that more than half of all youth referred to the juvenile courts were referred only once.

Careers containing an index violent referral were the least common of all juvenile court careers. Interestingly, unlike the other three single offense careers, careers containing only (one or more) index violent offenses were not the most common example of a career containing an index violent offense. The most common career containing an index violent offense referral was the the career profile with the widest range of offenses, career type 1111 - the *violent generalist*. This pattern was found in the career distributions of both males and females.

To put this in perspective, if a gambler were forced to bet on the character of the delinquent court career knowing only that the youth was referred at some time for an index property offense, the most reasonable bet would be that the youth's career was limited to only index property referrals (career type 0100). The same holds true knowing only that the career contained a nonindex delinquency (career type 0010) or status offense (career type 0001): the most reasonable bet would be that the youth's court career would not extend beyond the single offense category. But knowing a youth was referred at some time in his career for an index violent offense, the gambler's best bet would be that the youth was a law-violating generalist and referred to court for a wide range of offenses.

The table also presents an ordered list of career types for careers with two or more referrals. By removing the one-time offenders, the pattern of career types changes markedly. All careers containing an index violent referral were still less common than any of the nonviolent careers, but within these two divisions the least common career type was the youth who specialized in only one

offense type. Therefore, true specialization, careers in which a youth was referred again and again for only one type of offense, was comparatively rare in juvenile court careers.

For youth with four or more court referrals, the 16 percent of youth who were responsible for over half of all the court referrals, the most common career by far was the career that contained referrals in every offense category except index violent, career type 0111 - the *nonviolent generalist*. Thus, there was a tendency for these youth to be involved in a wide range of nonviolent law-violating behavior. True specialization was rare for youth with four or more referrals. Careers containing only index property, or only nonindex delinquency, or only status offense referrals were not common; but not one youth with four or more referrals had a career that contained only index violent referrals.

Distributions of Juvenile Court Careers Types
Using the Four Category Coding Scheme of
Index Violent/Index Property/Nonindex Delinquency/Status

All Careers		Careers with 2 or more referrals		Careers with 4 or more referrals	
Type	Frequency	Type	Frequency	Type	Frequency
0100	19,556	0110	6,103	0111	4,858
0010	14,409	0111	5,599	0110	2,076
0001	12,920	0011	4,093	0011	1,210
0110	6,103	0101	3,525	1111	968
0111	5,599	0100	2,696	0101	819
0011	4,093	0010	2,002	1110	539
0101	3,525	0001	1,902	0100	242
1111	968	1111	968	0001	172
1101	633	1110	633	1011	145
1000	631	1100	348	0010	114
1100	348	1010	278	1101	98
1010	278	1011	197	1100	73
1011	197	1101	143	1010	54
1101	143	1001	101	1001	6
1001	101	1000	25	1000	0

The structure of court careers indicates that youth are likely to be involved in a wide range of law-violating behavior. While true specialization within a single offense category was relatively uncommon for youth with more than 2 referrals, the observed degree of specialization, either within an individual offense category or a limited set of categories, was more common than would be predicted by a pure random chance model of delinquent behavior. In summary, active juveniles tend to be generalists rather than specialists; but some specialization is indicated.

Conclusions

Juvenile courts have the opportunity of intervening in the lives of a large percentage of youth at a time when problems are apparent and with the authority to affect change. The volume of youth who enter a court restricts both the quantity and quality of attention that can be given. It is, therefore, essential that a court's limited resources be efficiently expended and that youth who need the discipline and/or the guidance the court can deliver be identified as quickly as possible.

The finding of developmental offense patterns in court careers supports the search for indicators of future law-violating behavior (e.g., risk-screening instruments). With these indicators, programs could be developed to concentrate specialized resources on youth most in need of services early in their court careers. Most importantly, the finding that a youth referred to court for a second time before the age of 16 could, with a high degree of certainty, be considered a chronic offender implies that the courts should not wait until the youth has returned for the fourth of fifth time before taking strong action. Most of these youth will cycle through the court's dispositional alternatives, consuming more and more resources. Greater expenditures earlier in a career should shorten a youth's law-violating career, should reduce future court workloads, and should provide greater protection to the community.

referral was found in 11 percent of all court careers. In these jurisdictions about 1 in every 5 court careers contained a referral for an underage liquor law violation.

Age of Onset

The age of onset is the age at which a youth is first referred to juvenile court. Overall, 42 percent of the youth began their court careers at age 16 or 17. For males the number of court careers that began at each age level increased continuously from age 7 through 17, though the number that began at ages 16 and 17 were nearly equal. For females the number of careers in each age of onset group peaked for the 16-year-old age group and decreased substantially for the 17-year-old onset group.

Age of onset was related to the youth's impact on the workload of the juvenile courts. Youth first referred to court at the ages of 9, 10 or 11 had twice as many referrals in their careers as did youth whose first referral occurred at age 15. But did the earlier age of onset youth have more referrals because they were more active or simply because they had more time to return to the juvenile court? Analyses of yearly incidence rates show that each age of onset group averaged about one referral every two years; therefore, the larger number of referrals in the careers of youth with younger ages of onset can be explained simply by the fact that they had more years under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court to accrue additional juvenile court referrals.

The nature of the career was also related to the age of onset. The earlier the age of onset of a court career, the greater was the likelihood that the career contained a referral for an index violent offense. For example, careers with an age of onset of 13 were twice as likely to contain an index violent offense as careers which began at 16, while the likelihood of a career containing a status offense was relatively independent of age of onset. Therefore, the earlier a delinquent career began, the more likely it was to contain serious delinquent behavior.

Recidivism

The majority of youth referred to the juvenile courts were referred only once. The juvenile court careers of 59 percent of youth ended with the first referral. Males were more likely to recidivate than females. Forty-six percent of all male careers contained more than one court referral compared to only 29 percent of female careers. Recidivism was also related to the nature of the first referral. Youth most likely to recidivate where those whose first referral was for burglary, truancy, motor vehicle theft, or robbery. Youth least likely to recidivate were those first referred for underage drinking, running away or shoplifting.

The nature of recidivism also varied with the nature of the first referral. Youth most likely to be referred for a subsequent index violent offense were those whose first referral was for robbery; over half of these youth recidivated and one-eighth were referred sometime later to the juvenile court for another index violent offense. Next to robbery, the youth most likely to be referred for a subsequent index violent offense were those youth whose first referral was for aggravated assault or burglary. The least likely to be referred for a subsequent index violent offense were youth first referred for underage drinking, truancy, drug law violations or shoplifting. Therefore, the nature of the first referral was predictive of future index violent referrals.

Chapter 1

The Need for Court Career Research

Over the past decade the serious juvenile offender has become a major focus of the juvenile justice community. More than any other group, these youth bring into focus the two conflicting principles that have molded the juvenile justice system. On one hand is the underlying belief that the purpose of the juvenile justice system is to rehabilitate youth who have displayed delinquent behavior; on the other is the call for accountability (i.e., sentencing according to responsibility), public safety and deterrence. One principle focuses on what is best for the youth, while the other concentrates on what is best for the community. Lately the swinging pendulum of political pressure has moved toward the community's concerns. Some state legislatures have established dispositional guidelines for juvenile courts which require specific sanctions for youth charged with a serious crime. Many states are considering new exclusionary laws modeled after New York's Juvenile Offender Act which gives the adult courts original jurisdiction over youth charged with serious offenses. But a large segment of the juvenile justice community still believes that most delinquent youth can be redirected onto a law-abiding course if they are placed in treatment programs designed to meet their special needs.

It is difficult to design a judicial response which addresses the needs of the youth and the needs of the community. For example, in an attempt to address both sets of concerns the membership of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in 1984 endorsed a list of recommendations to guide juvenile courts in developing policies and programs dealing with serious juvenile offenders. Included in their recommendations are the following:

> The needs of all serious, chronic or violent juvenile offenders are not the same. While many require secure placements, decisions regarding levels of security and intensity of treatment should be tailored to meet the offender's individual needs while being sensitive to the concerns for public safety;
>
> To the extent public safety will permit, the primary goal of the juvenile court should be rehabilitation, but with consideration for general deterrence, general prevention and strengthening of social institutions such as families, schools, and community organizations;
>
> The juvenile court and the juvenile justice system are in the best position to respond effectively to the problems of serious juvenile crime; however, there are juveniles for whom the resources and processes available to the juvenile court will serve neither to rehabilitate the juvenile, nor to provide a suitable sanction for the offense, nor to adequately protect the public. Such juveniles should be tried and, if convicted, sentenced in the adult criminal court;
>
> Guidelines incorporating all decision factors should be adopted as a means of reducing dispositional disparity for serious, chronic or violent offenders. The guidelines should be focused primarily on accountability, fitting the severity of the disposition to the severity of present and past offenses. ...[However] provisions should be made in any guidelines for the judge to be able to depart from the presumptive disposition upon setting forth in writing the specific aggravating and mitigating factors found to justify such departure;

Research and evaluation on the treatment of serious, chronic or violent juvenile offenders should be continued with emphasis on rehabilitation, accountability and public safety.

These recommendations certainly encourage the development of programs and procedures that are sensitive to both sets of concerns. But translating such general principles into practical tools for guiding dispositional decision-making, designing intervention strategies, and efficiently expending the court's resources is not a simple task because these efforts (except those based solely on accountability) presume an ability to predict future delinquent behavior. For example, recently as a result of the highly publicized finding that a few adults commit a disproportionate quantity of serious crime (Chaiken and Chaiken, 1982), many (e.g., Greenwood, 1982) have argued for a policy of selective incapacitation. This policy presumes an ability to identify from their criminal and juvenile records those offenders who would be most likely to commit criminal acts at a high rate. There are clearly ethical and legal concerns with the concept of selective incapacitation in a punishment-oriented system; even in a juvenile system where such programs could translate into more intensive treatment and services, the legal and ethical concerns are still great. Regardless, it is likely that the prediction of future behavior from past behavior will continue to be an integral (although often hidden) part of both the adult and juvenile justice systems and that judicial responses designed to address both the needs of the youth and the needs of the community will be difficult to operationalize.

The Nature of Delinquent Career Research

One goal of delinquency research should be to establish a base of valid information that will enable legislators, court personnel, social planners, and policy makers to understand the problems they face and what they can do to reduce them (e.g., Hamparian, Schuster, Dinitz, and Conrad, 1978). In the last fifteen years the birth cohort studies conducted in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Tracy, Wolfgang, and Figlio, 1985; Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin, 1972), in Columbus, Ohio (Hamparian, Schuster, Dinitz, and Conrad, 1978), and in Racine, Wisconsin (Shannon, 1982) have added to our understanding of the extent and character of juvenile law-violating behavior. These and other delinquent career studies have found that:

Over 90 percent of males and 75 percent of females are involved in at least one incident during their juvenile years for which they could be arrested (Shannon, 1982);

About one-third of juvenile males are involved with the police to the extent that the incident is recorded in their official records (Tracy, Wolfgang, and Figlio, 1985; Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin, 1972);

About half of all juveniles with a police record have only one police contact, while the other half recidivate (Tracy et al., 1985; Wolfgang et al., 1972);

A small percentage of juveniles are responsible for the vast majority of serious offenses committed by juveniles (Tracy et al., 1985; Shannon, 1982; Hamparian et al., 1978; Wolfgang et al., 1972);

There is some evidence to support the belief that the earlier the age of onset of delinquency careers the longer and more serious the careers will be (Tracy et al., 1985; Shannon, 1982; Hamparian et al., 1978; Wolfgang et al., 1972);

There is little evidence to support the belief that the offenses committed during a juvenile's career systematically progress from less to more serious (Shannon, 1982; Hamparian et al., 1978; Wolfgang et al., 1972);

Less than 2 percent of juveniles come to the attention of the police for a violent offense (Hamparian et al., 1978; Wolfgang et al., 1972);

Chronically violent juvenile offenders are rare (Hamparian et al., 1978);

Juvenile delinquents do not specialize, but drift from one kind of offense to another (Klein, 1984; Hamparian et al., 1978; Wolfgang et al., 1972); and

There is evidence both to support and negate the belief that the commission of a status offense is predictive of a future delinquency career (Farrington, 1986; Kobrin, Hellum, and Peterson, 1980; Clarke, 1975).

This picture of delinquency is based primarily on police contacts, an appropriate level of analysis if the goal is to understand delinquency from the perspective of law enforcement. However, the characteristics of a law-violating career from a law enforcement and a juvenile court perspective may be different. Many officially recorded police contacts are not referred to the juvenile court. These tend to be the more minor offenses. In addition, law enforcement may be more likely to refer a youth to juvenile court if the youth has ignored prior warnings. Consequently in comparison to the police perspective, a law-violating career characterized from the records of a juvenile court is likely to contain fewer contacts, more serious behaviors on average, and have an older age of onset. Therefore, if research is to provide the juvenile courts with comparative information on the nature and characteristics of the law-violating careers of the youth that come before them, a portrait of juvenile court careers should be developed and differences in the nature of careers when viewed by the various components of the juvenile justice system should be delineated. With empirically based profiles of juvenile court careers available to court personnel, youth in need of special attention could be more easily identified and court resources could be more efficiently expended. For example, if chronic offenders could be identified at an early stage in their delinquent careers, remedial services could be intensified and focused intervention strategies applied to maximize the court's rehabilitative influence on these youth and, in doing so, protect the community. As Chaiken and Chaiken (1982) concluded:

> For violent predators, the most effective program might have to focus on preventing those patterns from developing. Their juvenile predilection for violence and drug use indicates that the conditions that foster the development of their serious criminal behavior operate when they are very young. Identifying them at a very early age and attempting to control the factors that enhance the chances of their becoming violent predators--whether social, psychological, or physiological--might be more sensible and effective than trying to "fix" them after they enter the adult criminal system, or even after they enter high school. Investigating the possibilities for prevention may present a more challenging but fruitful line of research than trying to discover ways to make standard rehabilitation programs reach the (adult) violent predator.

Conclusions

If better decision-making is the primary goal of research, then the direct examination of the court careers of juvenile offenders has great potential to improve the court's ability to react in an effective and efficient manner. But juvenile court career patterns have not been empirically developed. Therefore, if forced to apply the criterion of valid information useful for decision-making, one would have to concede reluctantly that the relevance of prior research on delinquent careers to the day-to-day functioning of the juvenile court is limited. If statements similar to those presented earlier could be made using juvenile court (instead of law enforcement) records, court practitioners would have an information base which could enhance their decision-making capabilities. This research program was designed to partially fill this information gap.

Chapter 2

Sources of Juvenile Court Career Data

The National Juvenile Court Data Archive (NJCDA), which is supported by grants from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice and housed at the National Center for Juvenile Justice, collects, stores and documents the automated case records of the nation's juvenile courts. While planning this study the contents of the NJCDA were reviewed. The records of the Utah Juvenile Court and the juvenile court in Maricopa County (Phoenix), Arizona were found to meet the demands of the research design. Both courts have original jurisdiction over all youth below 18 years of age and over both criminal law violations and the traditional status offenses. Unlike some juvenile courts which are limited to only the judicial functions, both courts also include intake and probation services. Therefore, their information systems contain records of referrals handled informally at the intake level without the filing of a petition and formally through the filing of a petition and subsequent court hearing before a judge. Most important for this work, both courts had developed sophisticated computerized case tracking systems which store detailed information on each case handled. Both information systems had existed for a sufficient period of time to contain the complete court histories of a large sample of youth. By the end of 1983 both systems contained the complete court careers of all youth handled who were born between January 1, 1962 and December 31, 1965. The author asked and was granted permission by the courts to use their data in this study. The data files with accompanying documentation were supplied to the project by the NJCDA.

Each information system was developed to meet its court's daily operations, management and research needs. Therefore, the data collected were detailed, reliable and accurate. Along with many other data elements, each system captured information on the sex, race, and date of birth of each youth referred and for each case the date of referral, offense(s) charged, county attorney's decision, offense(s) petitioned, court disposition and date of disposition. However, because each system was developed locally, the structure of the data and the coding categories were unique to the system. As part of the archiving procedure, NJCDA restructures data provided by courts into data bases with a common unit of count, the case,[1] and into a format that can be handled by standard statistical analysis software packages. Since each archived data set retains the court's original variables and coding structures, the two data sets were combined by recoding them into a common structure which captured as much of the detail as possible from the original files. (An outline of the offense recoding process is presented in the appendix to this report.) In summary, the case records from both courts' automated juvenile court information systems were transformed into a common format with the assistance of the NJCDA and, when combined, produced a description of the court career of each youth referred.

[1] A case is comprised of one or more offenses referred to court intake on a single day. Eighty percent of all cases contained only one offense and 5 percent contained three or more offenses. In the large majority of referrals all of the offenses contained in a case record were the result of a single law-violating incident. For example, a youth was charged with disorderly conduct, curfew violation, and possession of alcohol after police were called to investigate a late night disturbance on a city street. Similarly, a youth apprehended immediately after burglarizing a home was charged with burglary, larceny-theft, and possession of stolen property. When a case contained more than one offense, the most serious, as defined by the local court, was selected to represent the case. The case was selected as the unit of count for the segments of a career because this research focuses on court activity and not law-violating behavior.

Jurisdictional Differences

In 1980 both the state of Utah and Maricopa County had a total population of 1.5 million individuals. In each jurisdiction the population of youth 14 through 17 years of age (roughly the population base for this study) totaled a little over 100,000 individuals. Both jurisdictions experienced large population increases during the 1970's. Between 1970 and 1980 the total population of Utah increased by 38 percent, while the population of Maricopa County increased by 55 percent. Approximately three-quarters of the increase in the state of Utah was the result of the nation's highest birth rate, with only one-quarter the result of immigration. In contrast, in Maricopa County three-quarters of the population increase between 1970 and 1980 was the result of migration into the county. Both jurisdictions in 1980 had an unemployment rate of 6 percent and a median family income of $20,000, with a little over 10 percent of their population living below the poverty level. In 1980 Utah's population was classified as 95 percent White, less than 1 percent Black, and about 5 percent other races, while Maricopa County's population was comprised of 88 percent White, 3 percent Black and 9 percent other races. In 1980, 13 percent of the population of Maricopa County and 4 percent in the state of Utah classified themselves as being of Spanish origin. In 1980, 16 percent of Utah's population was classified as rural compared to only 5 percent of the Maricopa population.

Reported crime statistics point to jurisdictional differences in the character of crime. In 1983 there were twice as many index violent crimes reported to law enforcement in Maricopa County than were reported in Utah. Therefore, with approximately equal total populations in each area, Maricopa County experienced a much higher serious crime rate. Arrest statistics point to jurisdictional differences in the nets cast by law enforcement agencies. Though both jurisdictions had equal youth populations in 1983, there were 45 percent more juvenile arrests in Utah than in Maricopa County (see Table 2-1). While Maricopa County had a larger number of juveniles arrested for index violent offenses, many more youth were arrested in Utah for what are commonly considered less serious crimes. Certainly the law enforcement agencies in these jurisdictions encountered a different volume and profile of juvenile offenders.

The juvenile court careers of the youth in this study also reflect these jurisdictional differences, once police diversion practices are taken into account. Policy in Maricopa County requires that all youth arrested be referred to juvenile court intake, while in Utah a large percentage of arrested youth are diverted by law enforcement and not referred to their juvenile court. Consequently, it is not surprising that the Utah and Maricopa cohorts (which contained roughly equal numbers of juveniles) generated about equal numbers of delinquency (non-status) court referrals (see Table 2-2). Paralleling arrest statistics, the Maricopa cohort also had a much larger number of index violent offense court referrals, a finding consistent with its more urban character. Previous research has shown that courts in urban areas tend to handle a greater proportion of serious offense cases than do juvenile courts in more rural areas (Snyder and Nimick, 1983). These juvenile courts also received cases from sources other than law enforcement agencies, such as schools, parents, and social agencies. This is especially true for status offense cases (Snyder, Finnegan, Nimick, Sickmund, Sullivan, and Tierney, 1987). Consequently, jurisdictional differences in the rate of status offense referrals may reflect differences in a juvenile court's responsibility for status offense matters within the child welfare system. While both cohorts generated equal numbers of delinquency referrals, the Utah cohort was referred to juvenile court for 59 percent more status offense referrals, likely indicating differences in the communities' attitudes toward such behavior and their desire to involve the juvenile court in these matters.

In all, compared to Maricopa County, the juvenile court system in Utah handled a smaller proportion of serious offense cases, while handling about the same number of delinquency referrals

Table 2-1

Juvenile Arrests in 1983

	Maricopa*		Utah**	
	Number	%	Number	%
INDEX VIOLENT	**708**	**4.0**	**506**	**2.0**
Murder & non-negligent manslaughter	9	0.1	6	0.0
Forcible rape	28	0.2	20	0.1
Robbery	172	1.0	113	0.4
Aggravated assault	499	2.8	367	1.4
INDEX PROPERTY	**7,671**	**43.4**	**9,905**	**38.6**
Burglary	1,917	10.8	1,733	6.7
Larceny	5,331	30.2	7,431	28.9
Motor vehicle theft	335	1.9	647	2.5
Arson	88	0.5	94	0.4
PART II	**9,293**	**52.6**	**15,267**	**59.5**
Simple assault	576	3.3	907	3.5
Forgery & conterfeiting	50	0.3	173	0.7
Fraud	40	0.2	113	0.4
Embezzlement	7	0.0	3	0.0
Stolen Property	172	1.0	261	1.0
Vandalism	888	5.0	1,519	5.9
Weapons	169	1.0	232	0.9
Prostitution	52	0.3	16	0.1
Sex offense	147	0.8	280	1.1
Bookmaking	0	0.0	1	0.0
Number & lottery	0	0.0	0	0.0
All other gambling	0	0.0	0	0.0
Sale & manufacturing				
Opium, cocaine	11	0.0	6	0.0
Marijuana	118	0.7	89	0.3
Synthetic narcotics	4	0.0	11	0.0
Other dangerous non-narcotics	12	0.0	39	0.2
Possession				
Opium, cocaine	12	0.0	1	0.0
Marijuana	843	4.8	1,016	4.0
Synthetic narcotics	24	0.1	11	0.0
Other dangerous non-narcotics	58	0.3	78	0.3
Offenses against family	2	0.0	0	0.0
Driving under influence	170	1.0	346	1.3
Liquor laws	2,143	12.1	3,082	12.0
Drunkenness	0	0.0	323	1.3
Disorderly conduct	439	2.5	684	2.7
Vagrancy	24	0.1	11	0.0
All other offenses	1,773	10.0	3,839	15.0
Curfew & loitering	835	4.7	987	3.8
Runaways	724	4.1	1,239	4.8
TOTAL	**17,672**	**100.0**	**25,678**	**100.0**

* Source: Special report prepared for this project by Arizona Departme t of Public Safety.
** Source: *Crime in Utah 1983*, Utah Department of Public Safety, p. 32.

Table 2-2

Juvenile Court Cases Involving Youth in the 1962-1965 Birth Cohorts

	Maricopa		Utah	
	Number	%	Number	%
INDEX VIOLENT	**2,776**	**3.6**	**1,221**	**1.4**
Murder & non-negligent manslaughter	57	0.1	33	0.0
Forcible rape	101	0.1	126	0.1
Robbery	1,067	1.4	476	0.5
Aggravated assault	1,551	2.0	586	0.7
INDEX PROPERTY	**34,466**	**45.3**	**28,342**	**32.4**
Burglary	9,818	12.9	5,246	6.0
Larceny-theft	22,156	29.1	19,635	22.5
Shoplifting	12,533	16.5	11,000	12.6
Other larceny-theft	9,623	12.6	9,735	9.9
Motor vehicle theft	2,048	2.7	3,356	3.8
Arson	444	0.6	105	0.1
NONINDEX DELINQUENCY	**22,313**	**29.3**	**31,412**	**36.0**
Person	3,484	4.6	2,837	3.2
Simple assault	3,216	4.2	2,588	3.0
Sexual offenses against persons	210	0.3	212	0.2
Kidnapping	58	0.1	37	0.0
Property	8,379	11.0	9,242	10.6
Vandalism	3,966	5.2	4,793	5.5
Possession of stolen property	720	0.9	1,092	1.2
Fraud, forgery and embezzlement	434	0.6	957	1.1
Trespassing	3,259	4.3	2,400	2.7
Drugs	4,044	5.3	4,924	5.6
Public Order	6,406	8.4	14,409	16.5
Weapons	872	1.1	744	0.9
Indecent exposure	329	0.4	325	0.4
Prostitution	207	0.3	41	0.0
Disorderly conduct	2,749	3.6	2,249	2.6
Obstruction of police	562	0.7	71	0.1
Obstruction of judiciary	1,119	1.5	4,002	4.6
Escape	123	0.2	483	0.6
Delinquent traffic	247	0.3	2,060	2.4
Other public order offenses	198	0.3	4,434	5.1
STATUS	**16,595**	**21.8**	**26,393**	**30.2**
Running away	4,188	5.5	2,699	3.1
Truancy	451	0.6	2,517	2.9
Incorrigibility	1,047	1.4	7,582	8.7
Liquor offenses	5,593	7.3	11,150	12.8
Curfew violation	5,316	7.0	2,445	2.8
TOTAL	**76,150**	**100.0**	**87,368**	**100.0**

and a much larger number of status offense referrals. These differences are the result of differences in the nature of juvenile law-violating behavior in the two jurisdictions and differences in the nets cast by and for the two juvenile justice systems. Therefore, it is essential when presenting analyses of data from these two courts that jurisdictional differences be distinguished fro. general underlying patterns. This will be done throughout the report.

Chapter 3

Youth with Juvenile Court Careers

Prevalence of Court Referral

Court records show that a total of 35,174 youth born between 1962 and 1965 were referred to the juvenile court in Maricopa County at least once before their eighteenth birthday, while 34,330 youth with the same birth years were referred to the court in Utah. The number of males and females ages 14 through 17 living in these jurisdictions on April 1, 1980 were developed by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the decennial census. These counts closely correspond to the number of youth born between 1962 and 1965 who resided within the geographical jurisdiction of the court. Combined, the court records and the census counts translate into an overall prevalence rate of juvenile court referral in these jurisdictions of 34 percent. That is, in both jurisdictions one-third of all youth born between 1962 and 1965 were referred to juvenile court at least once before their eighteenth birthday for a delinquent or a status offense (see Table 3-1). In both jurisdictions the male prevalence rate was more than double the female rate. Nearly half (46 percent) of all males and one-fifth (21 percent) of all females had a juvenile court record.

Table 3-1

Juvenile Court Prevalence Rates in the 1962-1965 Birth Cohorts

	Total	Males	Females
Maricopa			
Number of Youth Referred	35,174	24,293	10,881
Estimated Population in Birth Cohort	101,600	51,900	49,700
Proportion of Cohort Referred	35%	47%	22%
Utah			
Number of Youth Referred	34,330	24,018	10,312
Estimated Population in Birth Cohort	105,200	53,700	51,500
Proportion of Cohort Referred	33%	45%	20%
Total			
Number of Youth Referred	69,504	48,311	21,193
Estimated Population in Birth Cohort	206,800	105,600	101,200
Proportion of Cohort Referred	34%	46%	21%

The majority of youth referred to court were referred at least once for a delinquency offense (i.e., a criminal law violation). Eighty-one percent of all court careers (85 percent of male careers and 73 percent of female careers) contained a delinquency referral. Translating these figures into prevalence rates, 28 percent of the birth cohort (39 percent of the males and 15 percent of the females) were referred to juvenile court at least once for a criminal law violation.

A high percentage of the juvenile court careers included at least one status offense referral (i.e., running away, truancy, curfew violation, incorrigibility, and underage liquor law violations). Overall, 40 percent of the court careers (38 percent of male careers and 42 percent of female careers) contained at least one status offense referral. In other words, 14 percent of the birth cohort (17 percent of the males and 9 percent of the females) were referred to court at least once for a status offense.

There are potential sources of error in the prevalence estimates presented above. However, it is possible to determine the direction and estimate the general magnitude of these effects. As previously cited, both jurisdictions experienced a major growth in their populations during the study period. Maricopa's growth was the result of a large influx of population from other parts of the country, while Utah's growth was primarily from within. Therefore, the 1980 population figures for Maricopa County, and even to some extent for Utah, underestimate the number of individuals born between 1962 and 1965 who ever lived within the jurisdiction of the courts during their juvenile years. Alone this source of error would have resulted in a greater overestimate of the prevalence of court referral in Maricopa County than in the Utah. However, such immigration would also have produced situations where a youth was involved with another juvenile court before moving into the jurisdiction. If some of these youth were never referred to the courts under study, they would not be included in the prevalence estimates, producing an underestimate of the cohort's actual prevalence of juvenile court referral.

The fact that the study could not determine the legal residence of each youth referred to court raises another potential bias in the prevalence estimates. Prevalence of juvenile court referral may have been overestimated by including the court careers of youth who were not residents of the jurisdiction when referred to court intake. The relative impact of this error can be assessed by determining from other data sources the percentage of cases handled by the courts that involve youth living outside the jurisdiction. In Utah this was not a serious concern. A review of the cases referred to the Utah court between 1980 and 1983 showed that less than 2 percent of the cases involved youth who did not live in Utah. Personal communication with Maricopa County court staff indicate that, in general, less than 5 percent of the cases involve youth living outside of Maricopa County. Consequently, in both jurisdictions the impact of non-resident youth on prevalence estimates is relatively small, with the greater impact being in Maricopa County.

In summary, while the prevalence estimates for both jurisdictions are affected by errors that overall tend to inflate the estimates, the error is probably less than 10 percent. By adjusting the estimates to compensate for this possible error level, the overall prevalence estimate is still greater than 30 percent, with a male estimate over 40 percent and a female estimate nearly 20 percent. So even using conservative estimates, the prevalence rates still indicate that a large proportion of the youth in these two jurisdictions were referred to the juvenile courts. The high prevalence rates indicate that these juvenile courts had the opportunity to intervene in the lives of many juveniles at a moment when problems were evident and with an authority to stimulate change. But the volume of youth who enter a court restricts both the quantity and quality of attention that can be given. It is therefore essential that a court's limited resources be efficiently expended and that the youth who need either the discipline or the guidance the court can deliver be identified as quickly as possible.

Composition of Court Careers

As Table 3-2 shows, 5 percent of all court careers contained a referral for an index violent offense (e.g., murder/non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, or aggravated assault).[2] More specifically, 3 percent of all careers contained a referral for aggravated assault and 2 percent a referral for robbery. Charges of forcible rape and murder were found in less than 0.5 percent of all careers. Careers containing an index violent offense referral were more common in Maricopa County than in Utah. More than half (53 percent) of all juvenile court careers contained a referral for an index property offense (i.e., burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, or arson). Nearly 44 percent of all careers involved a larceny-theft referral, which in most instances was shoplifting. A referral for burglary was found in 14 percent of all court careers, motor vehicle theft in less than 6 percent, and arson in less than 1 percent of the court careers.

The charge of simple assault, an offense that has been classified as a *violent* offense in some work (e.g., Hamparian, Schuster, Dinitz and Conrad, 1978), was a part of more than 7 percent of all court careers. Vandalism and trespassing were the most common nonindex property offenses; vandalism was found in almost 11 percent of careers and trespassing in more than 7 percent. Youth were charged with drug law violations in nearly 11 percent of all careers. Finally, 19 percent of all juvenile court careers contained an underage liquor law violation and more than 7 percent of all youth in the cohort were charged at least once in their careers with running away from home.

The career profiles of males and females (Tables 3-3A and 3-3B) point to some sex differences in court involvement. For example, 6 percent of all male court careers contained a referral for an index violent offense, compared to only 1 percent of female careers. A little more than one-half of male and female careers contained an index property offense referral; and about 4 in every 10 male and female careers contained a status offense referral. Assuming relatively equal numbers of males and females in the general population, the ratio of the number of male-to-female careers containing a specific offense provides a comparison of their relative involvement in each law-violating behavior. Overall, males were about twice as likely as females to be referred to juvenile court and outnumbered females in almost every offense category (see Table 3-3C). Males were 10 times more likely than females to be referred to juvenile court at some time in their careers for an index violent offense. Males were more than twice as likely as females to have a court career containing an index property offense, with large differences within specific offense categories. Males were 11 times as likely as females to have a career containing a charge of burglary, 8 times as likely to have a career containing a charge of arson, and 6 times as likely to have a career containing a charge of motor vehicle theft. Overall, males were twice as likely as females to have a juvenile court career which included a referral for larceny-theft. However, this sex difference did not hold for the sub-categories of larceny-theft. Females were as likely as males to have a court career containing a referral for shoplifting.

[2] It should be noted that throughout this work offenses were grouped into the traditional Uniform Crime Report offense groupings to enable comparison of these results with those of other studies. The original designers of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program never intended the index offense groupings to be considered as the *serious* offenses. These offenses were intended to be *index* offenses, to yield a relatively reliable index of crime because they were commonly reported by law enforcement agencies. However, this barometer of crime has been elevated beyond its original status and at present has assumed for many the aura of seriousness. Many of the crimes which are classified in the index offenses, such as shoplifting in the 'Larceny-theft' category and joy-riding in the 'Motor vehicle theft' category are commonly handled as very minor offenses by the juvenile courts (Snyder et al., 1987). But for consistency with other work, these groupings will be retained.

Table 3-2

Number and Percentage of Court Careers Containing a Specific Offense

	Maricopa		Utah		Combined	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
INDEX VIOLENT	**2,255**	**6.4**	**1,044**	**3.0**	**3,299**	**4.7**
Murder & non-negligent manslaughter	56	0.2	30	0.1	86	0.1
Forcible rape	97	0.3	116	0.3	213	0.3
Robbery	895	2.5	411	1.2	1,306	1.9
Aggravated assault	1,377	3.9	537	1.6	1,914	2.8
INDEX PROPERTY	**20,825**	**59.2**	**16,050**	**46.8**	**36,875**	**53.1**
Burglary	6,414	18.2	3,356	9.8	9,770	14.1
Larceny-theft	16,632	47.3	13,678	39.8	30,310	43.6
Shoplifting	10,949	31.1	9,260	27.0	20,209	29.1
Other larceny-theft	7,377	21.0	6,203	18.1	13,580	19.5
Motor vehicle theft	1,650	4.7	2,275	6.6	3,925	5.6
Arson	427	1.2	101	0.3	528	0.8
NONINDEX DELINQUENCY	**14,609**	**41.5**	**17,671**	**51.5**	**32,280**	**46.4**
Person	3,044	8.7	2,413	7.0	5,457	7.9
Simple assault	2,826	8.0	2,213	6.4	5,039	7.2
Sexual offenses against persons	204	0.6	206	0.6	410	0.6
Kidnapping	57	0.2	35	0.1	92	0.1
Property	6,922	19.7	6,983	20.3	13,905	20.0
Vandalism	3,492	9.9	3,984	11.6	7,479	10.8
Possession of stolen property	666	1.9	999	2.9	1,665	2.4
Fraud, forgery and embezzlement	413	1.2	819	2.4	1,232	1.8
Trespassing	3,026	8.6	2,186	6.4	5,212	7.5
Drugs	3,446	9.8	3,916	11.4	7,362	10.6
Public Order	5,100	14.5	10,140	29.5	15,240	21.9
Weapons	832	2.4	713	2.1	1,545	2.2
Indecent exposure	308	0.9	300	0.9	608	0.9
Prostitution	167	0.5	34	0.1	201	0.3
Disorderly conduct	2,475	7.0	1,990	5.8	4,465	6.4
Obstruction of police	550	1.6	71	0.2	621	0.9
Obstruction of judiciary	911	2.6	2,837	8.3	3,748	5.4
Escape	112	0.3	374	1.1	486	0.7
Delinquent traffic	239	0.7	1,890	5.5	2,129	3.1
Other public order offenses	197	0.6	4,083	11.9	4,280	6.2
STATUS	**11,747**	**33.4**	**15,799**	**46.0**	**27,546**	**39.6**
Running away	3,070	8.7	1,978	5.8	5,048	7.3
Truancy	396	1.1	2,121	6.2	2,517	3.6
Incorrigibility	803	2.3	5,284	15.4	6,087	8.8
Liquor offenses	4,891	13.9	8,419	24.5	13,310	19.1
Curfew violation	4,324	12.3	2,131	6.2	6,455	9.3
TOTAL	**35,174**		**34,330**		**69,504**	

Table 3-3A

Number and Percentage of Male Court Careers Containing a Specific Offense

	Maricopa		Utah		Combined	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
INDEX VIOLENT	**2,034**	**8.4**	**963**	**4.0**	**2,997**	**6.2**
Murder & non-negligent manslaughter	53	0.2	30	0.1	83	0.2
Forcible rape	95	0.4	115	0.5	210	0.4
Robbery	816	3.4	384	1.6	1,200	2.5
Aggravated assault	1,236	5.1	483	2.0	1,719	3.6
INDEX PROPERTY	**14,493**	**60.0**	**11,284**	**47.0**	**25,777**	**53.4**
Burglary	5,825	24.0	3,114	13.0	8,939	18.5
Larceny-theft	10,761	44.3	9,280	38.6	20,041	41.5
Shoplifting	5,904	24.3	5,493	22.9	11,397	23.6
Other larceny-theft	6,306	26.0	5,342	22.2	11,648	24.1
Motor vehicle theft	1,507	6.2	1,885	7.8	3,392	7.0
Arson	384	1.6	87	0.4	471	1.0
NONINDEX DELINQUENCY	**11,763**	**48.4**	**14,262**	**59.4**	**26,025**	**53.9**
Person	2,540	10.5	1,881	7.8	4,421	9.2
Simple assault	2,330	9.6	1,694	7.1	4,024	8.3
Sexual offenses against persons	200	0.8	197	0.8	397	0.8
Kidnapping	53	0.2	30	0.1	83	0.2
Property	5,885	24.2	6,030	25.1	11,915	24.7
Vandalism	3,179	13.1	3,561	14.8	6,740	14.0
Possession of stolen property	625	2.6	916	3.8	1,541	3.2
Fraud, forgery and embezzlement	302	1.2	601	2.5	903	1.9
Trespassing	2,418	10.0	1,909	7.9	4,327	9.0
Drugs	2,813	11.6	3,175	13.2	5,988	12.4
Public Order	4,103	16.9	8,350	34.8	12,453	25.8
Weapons	785	3.2	690	2.9	1,475	3.1
Indecent exposure	278	1.1	275	1.1	553	1.1
Prostitution	36	0.1	21	0.1	57	0.1
Disorderly conduct	1,980	8.2	1,634	6.8	3,614	7.5
Obstruction of police	402	1.7	61	0.3	463	1.0
Obstruction of judiciary	725	3.0	2,102	8.8	2,827	5.9
Escape	100	0.4	266	1.1	366	0.8
Delinquent traffic	220	0.9	1,651	6.9	1,871	3.9
Other public order offenses	180	0.7	3,565	14.8	3,745	7.8
STATUS	**8,061**	**33.2**	**10,519**	**43.8**	**18,580**	**38.5**
Running away	1,416	5.8	933	3.9	2,349	4.9
Truancy	260	1.1	1,144	4.8	1,404	2.9
Incorrigibility	502	2.1	3,486	14.5	3,988	8.3
Liquor offenses	3,806	15.7	6,283	26.2	10,089	20.9
Curfew violation	3,392	14.0	1,556	6.5	4,948	10.2
TOTAL	**24,293**		**24,018**		**48,311**	

Table 3-3B

Number and Percentage of Female Court Careers Containing a Specific Offense

	Maricopa		Utah		Combined	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
INDEX VIOLENT	**221**	**2.0**	**81**	**0.8**	**302**	**1.4**
Murder & non-negligent manslaughter	3	0.0	0	0.0	3	0.0
Forcible rape	2	0.0	1	0.0	3	0.0
Robbery	79	0.7	27	0.3	106	0.5
Aggravated assault	141	1.3	54	0.5	195	0.9
INDEX PROPERTY	**6,332**	**58.2**	**4,766**	**46.2**	**11,098**	**52.4**
Burglary	589	5.4	242	2.3	831	3.9
Larceny-theft	5,871	54.0	4,398	42.6	10,269	48.4
Shoplifting	5,045	46.4	3,767	36.5	8,812	41.6
Other larceny-theft	1,071	9.8	861	8.3	1,932	9.1
Motor vehicle theft	143	1.3	390	3.8	533	2.5
Arson	43	0.4	14	0.1	57	0.3
NONINDEX DELINQUENCY	**2,846**	**26.2**	**3,409**	**33.1**	**6,255**	**29.5**
Person	504	4.6	532	5.2	1,036	4.9
Simple assault	496	4.6	519	5.0	1,015	4.8
Sexual offenses against persons	4	0.0	9	0.1	13	0.1
Kidnapping	4	0.0	5	0.0	9	0.0
Property	1,037	9.5	953	9.2	1,990	9.4
Vandalism	313	2.9	423	4.1	736	3.5
Possession of stolen property	41	0.4	83	0.8	124	0.6
Fraud, forgery and embezzlement	111	1.0	218	2.1	329	1.6
Trespassing	608	5.6	277	2.7	885	4.2
Drugs	633	5.8	741	7.2	1,374	6.5
Public Order	997	9.2	1,790	17.4	2,787	13.1
Weapons	47	0.4	23	0.2	70	0.3
Indecent exposure	30	0.3	25	0.2	55	0.3
Prostitution	131	1.2	13	0.1	144	0.7
Disorderly conduct	495	4.5	356	3.5	851	4.0
Obstruction of police	148	1.4	10	0.1	158	0.7
Obstruction of judiciary	186	1.7	735	7.1	921	4.3
Escape	12	0.1	108	1.0	120	0.6
Delinquent traffic	19	0.2	239	2.3	258	1.2
Other public order offenses	17	0.2	518	5.0	535	2.5
STATUS	**3,686**	**33.9**	**5,280**	**51.2**	**8,966**	**42.3**
Running away	1,654	15.2	1,045	10.1	2,699	12.7
Truancy	136	1.2	977	9.5	1,113	5.3
Incorrigibility	301	2.8	1,798	17.4	2,099	9.9
Liquor offenses	1,085	10.0	2,136	20.7	3,221	15.2
Curfew violation	932	8.6	575	5.6	1,507	7.1
TOTAL	**10,881**		**10,312**		**21,193**	

Table 3-3C

Ratio of the Number of Male/Female Careers Involving a Specific Offense

	Maricopa	Utah	Combined
INDEX VIOLENT	**9.2**	**11.9**	**9.9**
Murder & non-negligent manslaughter	17.7		27.7
Forcible rape	47.5	115.0	70.0
Robbery	10.3	14.2	11.3
Aggravated assault	8.8	8.9	8.8
INDEX PROPERTY	**2.3**	**2.4**	**2.3**
Burglary	9.9	12.9	10.8
Larceny-theft	1.8	2.1	2.0
Shoplifting	1.2	1.5	1.3
Other larceny-theft	5.9	6.2	6.0
Motor vehicle theft	10.5	4.8	6.4
Arson	8.9	6.2	8.3
NONINDEX DELINQUENCY	**4.1**	**4.2**	**4.2**
Person	5.0	3.5	4.3
Simple assault	4.7	3.3	4.0
Sexual offenses against persons	50.0	21.9	30.5
Kidnapping	13.3	6.0	9.2
Property	5.7	6.3	6.0
Vandalism	10.2	8.4	9.2
Possession of stolen property	15.2	11.0	12.4
Fraud, forgery and embezzlement	2.7	2.8	2.7
Trespassing	4.0	6.9	4.9
Drugs	4.4	4.3	4.4
Public Order	4.1	4.7	4.5
Weapons	16.7	30.0	21.1
Indecent exposure	9.3	11.0	10.1
Prostitution	0.3	1.6	0.4
Disorderly conduct	4.0	6.9	4.9
Obstruction of police	2.7	6.1	2.9
Obstruction of judiciary	3.9	2.9	3.1
Escape	8.3	2.5	3.1
Delinquent traffic	11.6	6.9	7.3
Other public order offenses	10.6	6.9	7.0
STATUS	**2.2**	**2.0**	**2.1**
Running away	0.9	0.9	0.9
Truancy	1.9	1.2	1.3
Incorrigibility	1.7	1.9	1.9
Liquor offenses	3.5	2.9	3.1
Curfew violation	3.6	2.7	3.3
ALL CAREERS	**2.2**	**2.3**	**2.3**

While males were about twice as likely as females to have a juvenile court career containing a status offense charge, there were large variations in male/female representation across the individual status offense categories. In fact, the only offense other than prostitution for which more females than males were referred to juvenile court was running away. The number of females charged with running away was 15 percent greater than the number of males. There were 26 percent more males than females charged with truancy, almost twice as many males charged with incorrigibility, and more than 3 times as many males charged with underage liquor law and curfew violations.

Age of Onset

When do juvenile court careers begin? Is the age of onset related to the length and seriousness of the career? A developmental model of delinquency describes a delinquent career as a process which, if left untreated, will progress from less to more serious forms of law-violating behavior (McNamara, 1977). Consequently, this model predicts that the earlier a delinquent career begins, the longer it will last and the greater will be the likelihood for the development of serious delinquent behavior. However, Klein (1984) concluded after reviewing the findings of 33 studies that there are no patterns in the law-violating behavior of juveniles and that the sequencing of law violations within a career was random. In contrast to a developmental model, Klein's cafeteria model predicts a broadening of the nature of the offenses in a career as the career continues, but the random nature of the behaviors should produce no cumulative increase in the overall seriousness of the set of behaviors. As we shall see, age of onset is inversely related to the number of referrals in the career. Consequently, both theories predict that those youth with an early age of onset (i.e., those with more referrals in their careers) would be more likely to have careers containing a serious offense. But the theories differ in their prediction for the placement of serious offenses within the career. Under a developmental model, serious offenses will be concentrated in the later stages of juvenile careers, while the cafeteria model predicts that serious offenses will be scattered randomly throughout the career.

There was a continuous increase in the number of youth beginning their court careers at each age level through age 16, with a slight decrease in the number of youth in the 17-year-old onset group in both jurisdictions (see Table 3-4). However, this general pattern is a combination of a male onset pattern which constantly increased through age 17 and a female pattern which peaked at 16 and dropped substantially for the 17-year-olds. At each age level males were more likely to enter the court population than females. For example, the number of males who entered the court system at 17 was over 3 times greater than the number of females with a similar age of onset. But the relative difference in this male-to-female ratio was age related. The ratio of the number of males to the number of females entering the court system at each age level was lowest in the 13- and 14-year-old age groups and greater for both younger and older age groups.

To separate the onset of officially recognized delinquent and status offense behavior, age of onset distributions were developed separately for first delinquent and first status offense referrals. The age of onset of a delinquent court career is the age at which a youth was first referred to a juvenile court for a delinquency, a non-status, offense. These analyses more closely parallel those generated by studies of police records, since only about half of all status offense cases are referred to juvenile court intake by law enforcement agencies, while the large majority of delinquency cases come from law enforcement sources (Snyder, Finnegan, Nimick, Sickmund, Sullivan, and Tierney, 1987). Replicating the Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin (1972) finding, the number of youth beginning delinquency court careers increased with age, peaking with the 16-year-old age group and decreasing for the 17-year-old group. This pattern was shared by both males and females. A similar pattern was

Table 3-4

Age of Onset Distributions
(Percentage of Careers Falling Into Each Age of Onset Group)

Age of Onset	Maricopa Male	Maricopa Female	Maricopa Total	Utah Male	Utah Female	Utah Total	Combined Male	Combined Female	Combined Total
Juvenile Court Careers									
7	1.4%	0.5%	1.1%	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.9%	0.4%	0.7%
8	2.4	0.8	1.9	1.0	0.4	0.9	1.7	0.6	1.4
9	3.2	1.4	2.6	1.7	0.7	1.4	2.4	1.1	2.0
10	4.0	2.1	3.4	2.5	1.2	2.1	3.3	1.7	2.8
11	4.8	3.6	4.4	3.2	2.3	2.9	4.0	3.0	3.7
12	6.1	6.4	6.2	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.6	5.7	5.6
13	8.9	11.1	9.6	8.3	10.7	9.0	8.6	10.9	9.3
14	13.0	17.4	14.3	13.6	17.0	14.6	13.3	17.2	14.5
15	15.9	18.3	16.6	17.9	20.8	18.7	16.9	19.5	17.7
16	19.9	20.2	20.0	23.1	22.3	22.9	21.5	21.2	21.4
17	20.5	18.2	19.8	23.2	19.5	22.1	21.8	18.8	20.9
Delinquent Offense Court Career									
7	1.4%	0.5%	1.1%	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.9%	0.3%	0.8%
8	2.5	0.8	2.0	1.2	0.4	1.0	1.8	0.6	1.5
9	3.4	1.4	2.8	1.9	1.0	1.6	2.6	1.2	2.2
10	4.3	2.3	3.7	2.9	1.5	2.5	3.6	2.0	3.2
11	5.2	4.1	4.9	3.6	2.9	3.4	4.4	3.5	4.1
12	6.7	6.8	6.8	5.6	5.5	5.6	6.2	6.2	6.2
13	9.5	11.5	10.0	9.1	10.7	9.5	9.3	11.2	9.8
14	13.4	17.4	14.6	14.2	16.5	14.8	13.8	17.0	14.7
15	15.9	17.8	16.5	17.8	20.3	18.5	16.8	19.0	17.4
16	19.1	19.4	19.2	21.9	22.2	22.0	20.4	20.7	20.5
17	18.7	17.9	18.5	21.6	18.8	20.8	20.1	18.3	19.6
Status Offense Court Careers									
7	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%
8	1.1	0.6	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.5
9	1.5	0.9	1.3	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.9	0.5	0.8
10	1.6	1.3	1.5	0.6	0.3	0.5	1.0	0.7	0.9
11	2.3	2.3	2.3	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.6	1.4	1.5
12	2.5	4.5	3.1	2.5	3.0	2.7	2.5	3.6	2.9
13	5.7	10.3	7.2	5.3	9.5	6.7	5.5	9.9	6.9
14	10.9	17.9	13.1	10.7	18.8	13.4	10.8	18.4	13.3
15	16.7	20.4	17.8	18.7	23.7	20.4	17.8	22.3	19.3
16	25.0	22.1	24.1	28.0	23.1	26.4	26.7	22.7	25.4
17	32.0	19.3	28.0	32.1	20.2	28.1	32.0	19.8	28.1

also found in the onset of status offense careers for females, but not for males. The number of females beginning a status offense career peaked at ages 15 and 16 and declined for the 17-year-old age group, while the number of males beginning a status offense career increased with age throughout the juvenile years. This increase in the male status offense onset pattern was so great that it compensated for the decline in the female curve causing the overall status offense onset distribution to increase continuously with age. For both males and females about 40 percent of all delinquent offense careers began at age 16 and 17. In comparison, over half of all status offense careers began at age 16 and 17, but there were large sex differences. Forty percent of all female status offense careers began during their last two years of juvenile court jurisdiction, compared to nearly 60 percent of male status offense careers. This large growth in the volume of status offense careers for older males was primarily the result of their high volume of underage liquor law violation referrals.

Age of onset was strongly related to the youth's impact on the workload of the juvenile court. The number of referrals in a youth's court career was highly related to the age of onset (see Table 3-5). Youth referred to court for the first time before the age of 12 had about twice as many referrals in their careers as did youth whose first referral occurred at age 15. Youth referred for the first time at age 17 had, on average, the fewest number of referrals in their court careers. This is not surprising since youth who began their careers at an early age were at risk of court referral for a longer period of time. But did early age of onset youth have more referrals in their careers simply because they had more time at risk of subsequent referral or were they more active?

To address this issue the yearly incidence of court referral was developed for each age of onset group (see Table 3-5). This measure, the yearly rate of recidivism, was calculated by dividing the average number of subsequent referrals in a career by the remaining time at risk under juvenile court jurisdiction (i.e., the time from first referral until the eighteenth birthday). For example, youth who began their court careers at age 12 had an average of 3.75 referrals in their career, or 2.75 subsequent referrals. On average, youth first referred at age 12 had 5.5 years remaining (the time period between age 12.5 and the eighteenth birthday) during which they were at risk of juvenile court referral; for youth who began their court careers at age 12, the yearly rate of recidivism was 2.75 referrals/5.5 years at risk, or 0.50 referrals/year at risk. The results of this analysis show that the yearly rates of recidivism were nearly constant across all age of onset groups. Therefore, early age of onset youth were not more active, they simply had more time to accrue a larger number of court referrals.

Both the developmental and cafeteria models of delinquent behavior predict that career length, and therefore age of onset, is related to the existence of serious offenses in the career. The court records clearly show that the earlier the age of onset of a court career, the greater was the likelihood that the career contained a referral for an index violent offense (see Table 3-6). For example, 8.7 percent of the careers of youth who began their court careers at age 11 contained an index violent offense, compared to only 4.3 percent of those careers that began at age 15. Similarly, careers which began at age 13 were twice as likely to contain an index violent offense as careers which began at 16 and careers with an age of onset of 14 were twice as likely to contain an index violent offense as careers which began at 17.[3] This general pattern, though not as pronounced, is also seen

[3] There is a departure from this pattern for those youth initially referred to court at age 7. For both males and females and in both jurisdictions, the proportion of careers containing an index violent referral increased from the 7-year-old to the 8-year-old onset group and then decreases continuously thereafter. Even though this is a small deviation from the general pattern, the sample size on which these statistics are based is relatively large (n = 520). At this point no explanation can be given for this departure from the general trend.

Table 3-5

Career Lengths and Recidivism Rates for Each Age of Onset Group

Age of Onset	Average Number of Referrals in Career	Yearly Rate of Recidivism*
7	4.64	0.35
8	5.15	0.44
9	4.48	0.41
10	4.44	0.46
11	4.05	0.47
12	3.75	0.50
13	3.18	0.48
14	2.71	0.49
15	2.16	0.46
16	1.63	0.42
17	1.22	0.44

* Defined as the average number of subsequent referrals (the average number of referrals after the onset of the career) per year.

for index property offenses. Although the likelihood that a career contained a nonindex delinquent offense also lessened with age of onset, the relative variations were far less than found in either the generally more serious index property or index violent categories. In comparison, the variations in the proportions of careers which contained a status offense varied little over age of onset groups.

Similar patterns were observed when male and female careers were studied separately. The probability that the careers of both males and females contained a referral for an index violent offense decreased substantially with increasing age of onset. A similar pattern was found for index property offenses in both male and female careers and for nonindex delir uent offenses in male careers. The likelihood of a female career containing a nonindex delinquent offense decreased only slightly with age of onset. The pattern of status offense careers, however, showed little consistent change with increasing age of onset for both males and females.

In summary, a youth's likelihood of being referred to juvenile court for the first time increased with age. The earlier a youth began a juvenile court career, the greater was the likelihood that the career contained a serious delinquent referral. However, the likelihood of a career containing a status offense was relatively independent of age of onset. A possible reason for this finding may be that the status offense category is so heterogeneous that each offense must be studied independently to find patterns of career development. It is known from national data that the number of referrals to juvenile court for running away and truancy peak at an earlier age than referrals for underage liquor law violations (Snyder, Finnegan, Nimick, Sickmund, Sullivan, and Tierney, 1987). It may be that the leveling of status offense proportions is a result of the growth and decline with age of various individual status offense behaviors.

Table 3-6

Proportion of Careers Containing a Specific Offense Type In Each Age of Onset Group

Age of Onset	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status
All Youth				
7	8.8%	70.4%	59.0%	41.3%
8	13.8	73.2	63.7	40.2
9	10.3	73.1	62.8	38.2
10	10.3	77.6	58.8	36.0
11	8.7	77.9	53.4	37.9
12	7.2	75.9	52.6	39.7
13	6.6	69.1	51.0	41.8
14	5.0	61.5	49.2	42.7
15	4.3	52.6	46.2	41.8
16	3.1	42.7	43.3	38.7
17	2.5	33.3	38.2	36.5
All Careers	4.7%	53.1%	46.4%	39.6%
Male				
7	9.9%	72.0%	62.8%	41.1%
8	15.2	74.8	68.0	40.4
9	11.6	73.2	67.6	38.3
10	12.0	77.9	65.0	35.7
11	10.7	77.6	60.9	38.7
12	9.6	77.2	61.4	39.8
13	9.1	71.5	62.0	39.7
14	7.0	64.1	59.5	40.9
15	5.7	53.9	55.4	39.8
16	3.5	42.1	50.0	37.5
17	3.2	31.4	42.0	36.1
All Male Careers	6.2%	53.4%	53.9%	38.5%
Female				
7	2.6%	61.0%	37.7%	42.9%
8	4.7	63.3	35.9	39.1
9	3.5	72.6	37.6	37.6
10	2.5	76.3	31.3	37.7
11	2.5	78.7	30.5	35.5
12	2.0	73.0	32.8	39.4
13	2.1	64.7	31.2	45.5
14	1.5	57.1	31.0	40.2
15	1.5	50.0	28.0	45.7
16	1.0	44.2	27.9	41.4
17	0.8	38.3	28.4	37.5
All Female Careers	1.4%	52.4%	29.5%	42.3%

Recidivism

The majority of youth referred to the juvenile courts were referred only once. Tables 3-7, 3-8A and 3-8B display the career lengths of the youth in this study in terms of the number of referrals in their careers. The court careers of 59 percent of youth ended with the first referral. The other 41 percent recidivated at least once before their eighteenth birthday. These careers contained from two to over fifty referrals. Males were more likely to recidivate than females. Forty-six percent of all male careers contained more than one court referral compared to only 29 percent of female careers.

Recidivism was related to the nature of the first referral. Table 3-9 shows the percentage of youth who recidivated after a first referral for a specific offense. In terms of the four general offense categories, youth first referred for an index violent offense were the most likely to recidivate, paralleling the findings of Wolfgang et al. (1972). Youth first referred for a status offense were the least likely to recidivate. But the percentage of recidivists varied little across these general offense categories. In fact, the range across the four general offense categories is much smaller than the range within categories. Focusing, therefore, on the more detailed offense categories, youth were

Table 3-7

Distribution of the Total Number of Referrals in Court Careers

	Maricopa		Utah		Combined	
Number of Referrals	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	21,643	61.5	19,248	56.1	40,891	58.8
2	5,900	16.8	5,866	17.1	11,766	16.9
3	2,645	7.5	2,828	8.2	5,473	7.9
4	1,471	4.2	1,777	5.2	3,248	4.7
5	914	2.6	1,159	3.4	2,073	3.0
6	620	1.8	776	2.3	1,396	2.0
7	476	1.4	575	1.7	1,051	1.5
8	333	0.9	428	1.2	761	1.1
9	270	0.8	334	1.0	604	0.9
10	206	0.6	263	0.8	469	0.7
11	145	0.4	209	0.6	354	0.5
12	111	0.3	142	0.4	253	0.4
13	98	0.3	128	0.4	226	0.3
14	80	0.2	108	0.3	188	0.3
15	69	0.2	77	0.2	146	0.2
16	41	0.1	57	0.2	98	0.1
17	34	0.1	59	0.2	93	0.1
18	26	0.1	47	0.1	73	0.1
19	22	0.1	36	0.1	58	0.1
20	12	0.0	32	0.1	44	0.1
21-30	55	0.2	141	0.4	196	0.3
31-40	2	0.0	34	0.1	36	0.1
40-50	1	0.0	5	0.0	6	0.0
over 50	0	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0
TOTAL	35,174	100.0	34,330	100.0	69,504	100.0

most likely to recidivate if their first referral was for burglary, truancy, incorrigibility, arson, motor vehicle theft, and robbery. Youth least likely to recidivate were those first referred for murder, status liquor law violations, running away, public order offenses, and shoplifting. These patterns of high and low recidivism probabilities were reflected in both jurisdictions and in both the male and female cohorts (see Tables 3-10A and 3-10B).

The nature of recidivism also varied with the nature of the first referral (see Table 3-11). The most likely to be referred for a subsequent index violent offense were those youth whose first referral was for robbery; over half of these youth recidivated and nearly one-quarter of those who recidivated were referred sometime later in their careers for another index violent offense. Next to robbery, those youth most likely to be referred for a subsequent index violent offense were those whose first referral was for arson, aggravated assault, or burglary. The least likely to be referred for a subsequent index violent offense were youth first referred for status liquor law violations, public order offenses, truancy, drug law violations, and shoplifting. In this sense the nature of the first referral can be used as a predictor of future index violent referrals.

Table 3-8A

Distribution of the Total Number of Referrals in Male Court Careers

	Maricopa		Utah		Combined	
Number of Referrals	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	13,390	55.1	12,509	52.1	25,899	53.6
2	4,411	18.2	4,165	17.4	8,576	17.8
3	2,125	8.7	2,084	8.7	4,209	8.7
4	1,230	5.1	1,346	5.6	2,576	5.3
5	780	3.2	919	3.8	1,699	3.5
6	555	2.3	648	2.7	1,203	2.5
7	412	1.7	486	2.0	898	1.9
8	303	1.2	358	1.5	661	1.4
9	251	1.0	283	1.2	534	1.1
10	176	0.7	225	0.9	401	0.8
11	138	0.6	192	0.8	330	0.7
12	100	0.4	127	0.5	227	0.5
13	91	0.4	114	0.5	205	0.4
14	78	0.3	97	0.4	175	0.4
15	65	0.3	74	0.3	139	0.3
16	39	0.2	53	0.2	92	0.2
17	32	0.1	51	0.2	83	0.2
18	26	0.1	43	0.2	69	0.1
19	20	0.1	34	0.1	54	0.1
20	10	0.0	31	0.1	41	0.1
21-30	55	0.2	139	0.6	194	0.4
31-40	2	0.0	34	0.1	36	0.1
41-50	1	0.0	5	0.0	6	0.0
over 50	0	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0
TOTAL	24,293	100.0	24,018	100.0	48,311	100.0

Future court referrals for an index property offense were equally likely for youth whose first referral was for an index property or an index violent offense. Youth most likely to return to court charged with an index property offense were youth first referred for burglary, arson, motor vehicle theft, robbery, and other larceny offenses. Those least likely to return for an index property offense were youth whose first referral was for status liquor law violations, public order offenses, running away, drug law violations, and shoplifting. Youth initially charged with running away, truancy, incorrigibility, and status liquor law violations were the most likely to return for a status offense. Youth first charged with any of the nonindex delinquent offenses were most likely to return charged with offenses within this category. In fact, first referral index violent offenders were the only group whose most likely subsequent offense was not within the same general category, although they were the most likely group to return for an index violent offense. In all, these data indicate some specialization within the juvenile court careers. (Specialization will be investigated in more detail later in this work.)

Table 3-8B

Distribution of the Total Number of Referrals in Female Court Careers

Number of Referrals	Maricopa		Utah		Combined	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	8,253	75.8	6,739	65.4	14,992	70.7
2	1,489	13.7	1,701	16.5	3,190	15.0
3	520	4.8	744	7.2	1,264	6.0
4	241	2.2	431	4.2	672	3.2
5	134	1.2	240	2.3	374	1.8
6	65	0.6	128	1.2	193	0.9
7	64	0.6	89	0.9	153	0.7
8	30	0.3	70	0.7	100	0.5
9	19	0.2	51	0.5	70	0.3
10	30	0.3	38	0.4	68	0.3
11	7	0.1	17	0.2	34	0.2
12	11	0.1	15	0.1	26	0.1
13	7	0.1	14	0.1	21	0.1
14	2	0.0	11	0.1	13	0.1
15	1	0.0	3	0.0	4	0.0
16	2	0.0	4	0.0	6	0.0
17	2	0.0	8	0.0	10	0.0
18	0	0.0	4	0.0	4	0.0
19	2	0.0	2	0.0	4	0.0
20	2	0.0	1	0.0	3	0.0
21-30	0	0.0	2	0.0	2	0.0
TOTAL	10,881	100.0	10,312	100.0	21,193	100.0

Tables 3-12A and 3-12B show that these general patterns were reflected in both the male and female cohorts, with some minor exceptions. Compared to males, only a very small percentage of females returned to court charged with an index violent offense, except those whose first referral was for an index violent offense. If a female's first referral was for an index violent offense, she was about as likely as a male to recidivate within this general offense category.

The probability of recidivating varied with the extent of the youth's prior court history. The probability of a future referral increased with the number of prior referrals in the career until about the fifth referral and remained relatively constant at this high level thereafter (see Figure 3-1). This pattern was generally the same for males and females (see Figure 3-2). Wolfgang et al. (1972) found

Table 3-9

Recidivism Probabilities at First Referral
(Percentage of Youth that Recidivated)

First Referral Offense	Maricopa	Utah	Combined
INDEX VIOLENT	**45.4%**	**47.8%**	**46.2%**
Murder	11.1	40.0	21.4
Forcible rape	38.5	47.9	44.6
Robbery	49.3	52.3	50.5
Aggravated assault	44.1	44.7	44.3
INDEX PROPERTY	**40.3**	**46.2**	**42.7**
Burglary	55.0	63.9	57.6
Larceny-theft	35.8	43.1	38.9
Shoplifting	30.3	39.4	34.3
Other larceny	46.5	51.6	48.6
Motor vehicle theft	50.1	52.4	51.4
Arson	53.9	48.9	53.1
NONINDEX DELINQUENCY	**38.5**	**43.1**	**41.1**
Person	43.4	45.7	44.4
Property	41.1	51.9	46.2
Drugs	35.4	46.5	40.9
Public order	32.5	34.9	34.2
STATUS	**33.6**	**42.0**	**38.4**
Running away	34.1	28.5	32.1
Truancy	59.6	56.1	56.7
Incorrigibility	60.5	55.0	55.6
Liquor offenses	24.0	33.9	30.0
Curfew	38.8	44.1	40.3
ALL CAREERS	**38.5**	**43.9**	**41.2**

Table 3-10A

Recidivism Probabilities at First Referral for Males
(Percentage of Youth that Recidivated)

First Referral Offense	Maricopa	Utah	Combined
INDEX VIOLENT	**47.4%**	**47.4%**	**47.4%**
Murder	12.5	40.0	23.1
Forcible rape	38.5	46.8	43.8
Robbery	50.4	52.7	51.1
Aggravated assault	46.8	44.4	46.1
INDEX PROPERTY	**48.9**	**53.6**	**50.8**
Burglary	57.1	65.7	59.7
Larceny-theft	45.2	51.0	47.8
Shoplifting	40.3	48.5	44.1
Other larceny	50.9	54.6	52.4
Motor vehicle theft	52.3	54.5	53.5
Arson	57.5	55.3	57.1
NONINDEX DELINQUENCY	**42.4**	**45.1**	**43.9**
Person	46.4	47.8	47.0
Property	45.3	54.9	49.9
Drugs	39.0	48.9	44.0
Public order	35.7	36.0	35.9
STATUS	**38.4**	**45.1**	**43.9**
Running away	43.2	24.0	36.1
Truancy	66.4	65.6	65.8
Incorrigibility	69.1	58.5	59.5
Liquor offenses	27.9	37.4	33.6
Curfew	43.6	49.7	45.2
ALL CAREERS	**44.9**	**47.9**	**46.4**

nearly identical recidivism patterns for males in the Philadelphia birth cohort study. Blumstein, Farrington, and Moitra (1985) argued that this pattern was actually a combination of two offender types. They labeled these types as the *desisters* (those with a relatively low recidivism probability of 35 percent) and the *persisters* (those with a recidivism probability of 80 percent). They argued that the rise in the observed recidivism probabilities at each contact point reflects the changing composition of the offenders at each stage of involvement, with the desisters stopping relatively early, thus leaving a residue composed increasingly of the high-recidivism persisters. This argument parsimoniously explains both the increasing probability of recidivating for the first several referrals and the relatively constant recidivism probability thereafter.

Table 3-10B

Recidivism Probabilities at First Referral for Females
(Percentage of Youth that Recidivated)

First Referral Offense	Maricopa	Utah	Combined
INDEX VIOLENT	**31.5%**	**51.4%**	**37.2%**
Murder	0.0	0.0	0.0
Forcible rape	0.0	100.0	100.0
Robbery	41.4	60.0	46.2
Aggravated assault	27.4	46.2	33.0
INDEX PROPERTY	**23.1**	**31.4**	**26.5**
Burglary	37.1	48.9	40.2
Larceny-theft	21.9	30.0	25.2
Shoplifting	21.1	28.8	24.3
Other larceny	26.4	37.1	30.6
Motor vehicle theft	33.3	46.0	42.7
Arson	27.6	14.3	26.5
NONINDEX DELINQUENCY	**24.1**	**34.1**	**29.2**
Person	32.4	40.6	36.7
Property	21.2	34.2	26.8
Drugs	24.7	39.2	31.9
Public order	23.3	29.0	26.8
STATUS	**26.0**	**37.9**	**32.9**
Running away	28.2	31.7	29.4
Truancy	49.4	49.5	49.5
Incorrigibility	51.6	50.2	50.4
Liquor offenses	15.1	26.6	22.3
Curfew	26.5	34.3	29.2
ALL CAREERS	**24.2**	**34.6**	**29.3**

This finding has had a dramatic effect on our nation's juvenile justice policy. Many courts wait until youth have, as a result of long referral histories, proven themselves to be chronic offenders before they feel confident in substantially increasing the level of sanctions, both in terms of severity and cost. If these youth could be identified earlier in their careers, the juvenile justice system could overcome the delay in imposing these sanctions, utilize its limited resources more efficiently, and provide increased protection to the community. But the system must wait for the youth to recidivate again and again before this identification can be made. Or does it?

Table 3-11

Relationship Between Nature of the First Referral and Nature of Future Referrals

First Referral Offense	Percentage that Recidivated	Percentage of Careers Containing a Future Referral for Each Offense Type: Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status
INDEX VIOLENT	**46.2**	**9.2**	**25.5**	**28.9**	**17.4**
Murder	21.4	7.1	7.1	14.3	14.3
Forcible rape	44.6	5.4	23.0	28.4	17.6
Robbery	50.5	12.4	31.4	29.7	16.8
Aggravated assault	44.3	7.7	22.4	28.8	17.8
INDEX PROPERTY	**42.7**	**4.1**	**26.8**	**24.9**	**18.6**
Burglary	57.6	7.1	40.0	34.8	23.7
Larceny-theft	38.9	3.4	23.4	22.3	17.2
Shoplifting	34.3	2.5	20.1	18.9	15.1
Other larceny-theft	48.6	5.1	30.4	29.3	21.5
Motor vehicle theft	51.4	4.3	33.9	31.8	23.3
Arson	53.1	9.0	37.5	32.6	22.6
NONINDEX DELINQUENCY	**41.1**	**3.0**	**20.5**	**26.1**	**18.9**
Person	44.4	5.0	23.4	28.0	18.5
Property	46.2	3.7	26.4	29.9	21.1
Drugs	40.9	2.2	17.7	24.2	20.8
Public Order	34.2	2.0	14.2	22.0	15.7
STATUS	**38.4**	**1.9**	**15.8**	**19.9**	**24.1**
Running away	32.1	2.1	17.0	16.0	21.4
Truancy	56.7	2.9	25.8	33.5	36.2
Incorrigibility	55.6	2.6	23.5	29.6	40.9
Liquor offenses	30.0	0.9	8.7	14.5	17.4
Curfew violations	40.3	2.9	19.0	21.7	21.3
ALL CAREERS	**41.2**	**3.3**	**22.0**	**24.1**	**20.1**

The notions of the chronic offender and the persister/desister are based on recidivism patterns that do not take into account the artificial truncation of the officially recorded law violations that result from studying only juvenile records. Many youth who appear to desist from delinquent activity simply *age out* of the juvenile justice system, while continuing to be involved in law-violating behavior. Consequently, the general decline with age in the probability of recidivating (returning to juvenile court) is greatly affected by the fact that older youth have correspondingly less time remaining in their period at risk for referral to juvenile court. For example, while 14-year-olds were

Table 3-12A

Relationship Between Nature of First Referral and Nature of Future Referrals for Males

First Referral Offense	Percentage that Recidivated	Percentage of Careers Containing a Future Referral for Each Offense Type: Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status
INDEX VIOLENT	**47.4**	**9.3**	**27.0**	**29.9**	**17.9**
Murder	23.1	7.7	7.7	15.4	15.4
Forcible rape	43.8	5.5	23.3	28.8	16.4
Robbery	51.0	12.3	32.9	29.0	16.4
Aggravated assault	46.1	7.9	23.9	30.9	19.2
INDEX PROPERTY	**50.8**	**5.7**	**33.1**	**31.6**	**22.0**
Burglary	59.6	7.6	41.5	36.7	24.5
Larceny-theft	47.7	5.0	30.0	29.7	21.1
Shoplifting	44.1	4.3	27.3	27.5	19.4
Other larceny-theft	52.4	5.9	33.4	32.5	23.2
Motor vehicle theft	53.5	7.1	36.6	33.8	23.0
Arson	57.1	9.5	41.3	35.3	24.2
NONINDEX DELINQUENCY	**43.9**	**3.5**	**22.6**	**28.9**	**20.1**
Person	47.0	5.9	25.1	31.3	19.3
Property	49.9	4.2	29.2	33.0	22.7
Drugs	43.9	2.7	20.1	27.3	22.0
Public Order	35.9	2.1	15.3	23.9	16.4
STATUS	**42.1**	**2.8**	**18.7**	**23.9**	**25.0**
Running away	36.1	4.1	23.6	21.3	21.7
Truancy	65.8	5.9	38.7	44.4	42.1
Incorrigibility	59.6	4.1	29.0	34.9	42.2
Liquor offenses	33.6	1.2	10.0	17.4	18.7
Curfew violations	45.2	3.7	21.8	26.2	23.2
ALL CAREERS	**46.4**	**4.3**	**26.1**	**28.9**	**21.9**

more than twice as likely as 17-year-olds to return to juvenile court (see Figure 3-3), they also had an average 2.5 years to recidivate compared to only 6 months for 17-year-olds, given that juvenile court jurisdiction in these courts ended at age 18. Therefore, any study of the impact of prior referrals on juvenile arrest or recidivism patterns must incorporate the youth's age or (more specifically) time at risk as a juvenile.

Table 3-12B

Relationship Between Nature of First Referral and Nature of Future Referrals for Females

First Referral Offense	Percentage that Recidivated	Percentage of Careers Containing a Future Referral for Each Offense Type: Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status
INDEX VIOLENT	**37.2**	**8.5**	**14.0**	**21.7**	**13.2**
Murder	-	-	-	-	-
Forcible rape	-	-	-	-	-
Robbery	46.2	12.8	17.9	35.9	20.5
Aggravated assault	33.0	6.8	12.5	15.9	9.1
INDEX PROPERTY	**26.5**	**0.9**	**14.1**	**11.6**	**11.9**
Burglary	40.2	3.2	26.5	19.2	17.0
Larceny-theft	25.2	0.7	13.2	10.7	11.2
Shoplifting	24.3	0.7	12.7	10.2	10.8
Other larceny-theft	30.6	0.9	15.9	13.8	13.7
Motor vehicle theft	42.7	0.7	22.4	23.4	24.8
Arson	25.0	5.6	11.1	13.9	11.1
NONINDEX DELINQUENCY	**29.2**	**1.2**	**11.8**	**14.6**	**14.1**
Person	36.7	2.3	18.0	17.8	15.7
Property	26.8	0.8	11.8	14.0	12.8
Drugs	31.9	0.5	10.6	14.9	17.1
Public Order	26.8	1.4	9.7	13.6	12.9
STATUS	**32.9**	**0.5**	**11.5**	**14.0**	**22.8**
Running away	29.4	0.8	12.7	12.6	21.2
Truancy	49.5	0.6	15.8	25.0	31.7
Incorrigibility	50.4	0.5	16.1	22.5	39.2
Liquor offenses	22.3	0.1	5.8	8.2	14.6
Curfew violations	29.2	1.0	12.7	11.3	16.9
ALL CAREERS	**29.3**	**0.9**	**12.8**	**13.1**	**16.1**

Table 3-13 presents the probability of recidivating at each referral point controlling for the age at referral.[4] Wolfgang et al. (1972) labeled those with five or more referrals, or more specifically

[4] The proper interpretation of the figures in Table 3-13 may be helped by a few examples. Seventy-seven percent of all youth whose second referral occurred at age 14 recidivated. Eighty-one percent of males whose second referral occurred at age 14 recidivated, compared to 67 percent of females. Fifty-nine percent of all youth with two referrals recidivated. Seventy percent of all youth referred at age 14 recidivated.

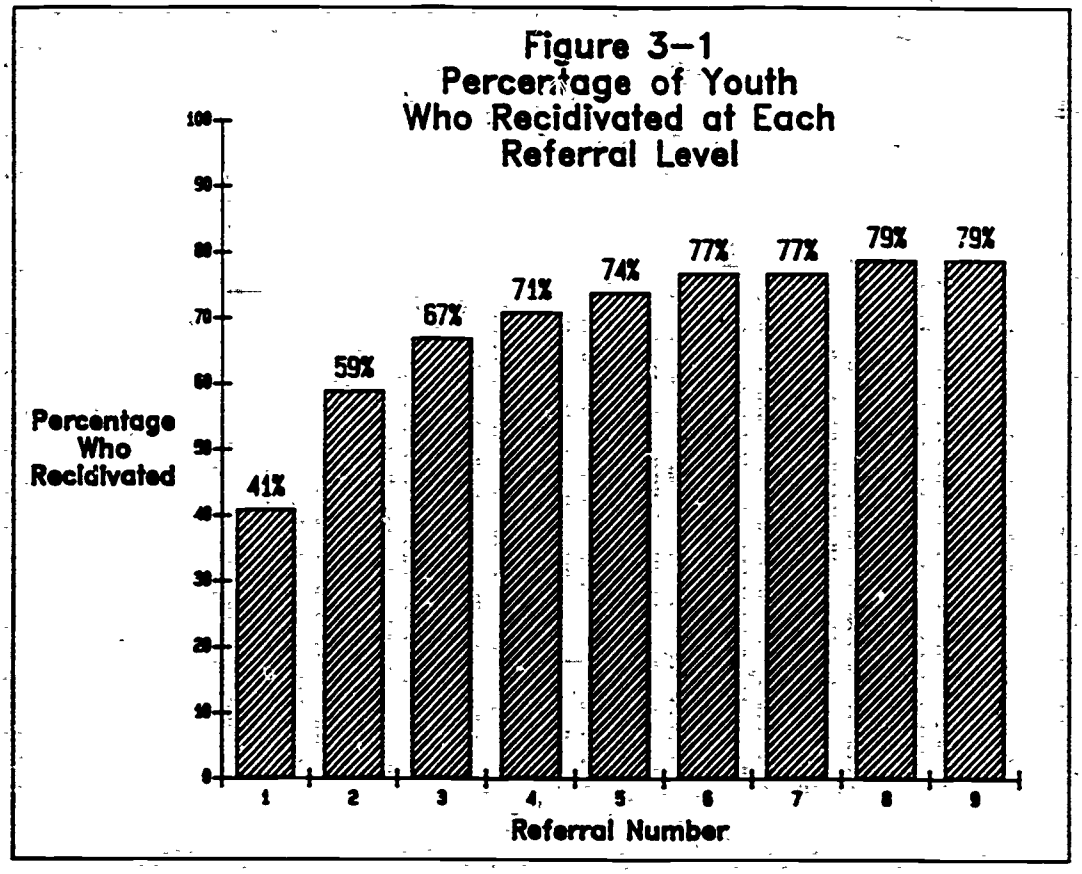


Figure 3–1
Percentage of Youth
Who Recidivated at Each
Referral Level
Percentage
Who
Recidivated
41%
59%
67%
71%
74%
77%
77%
79%
79%
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
Referral Number

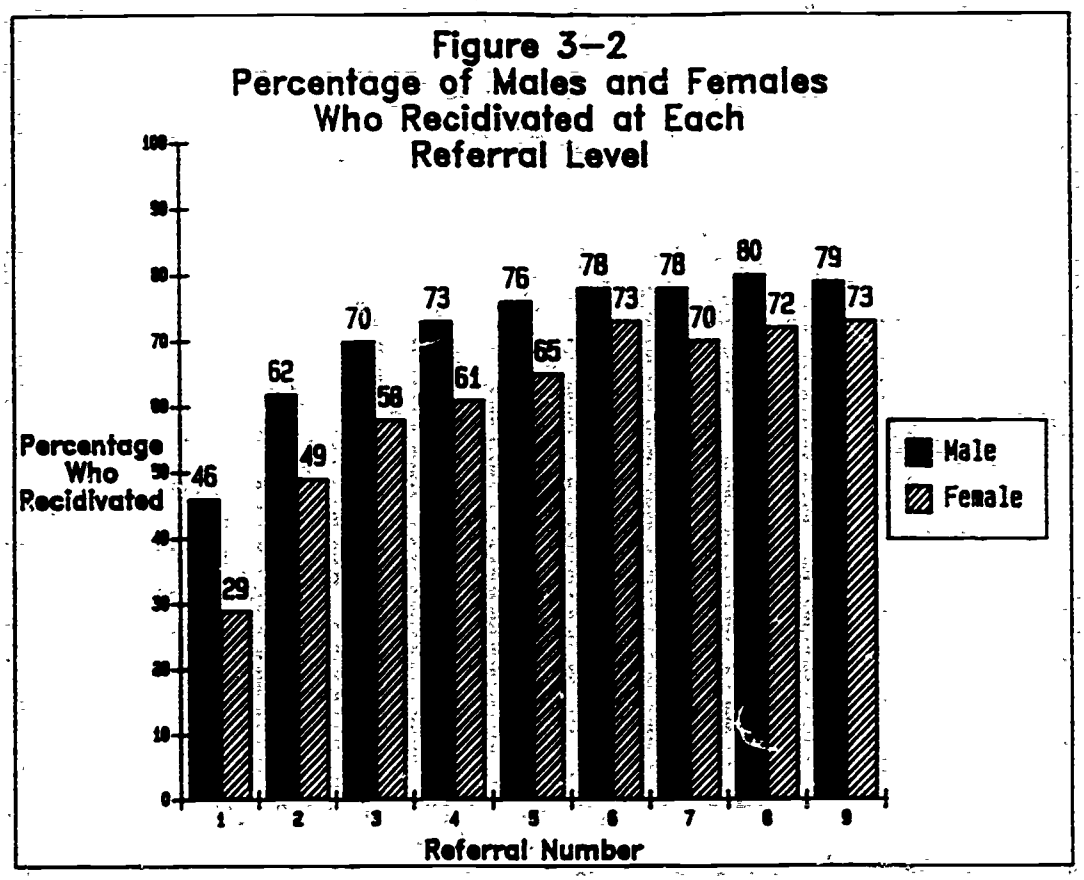
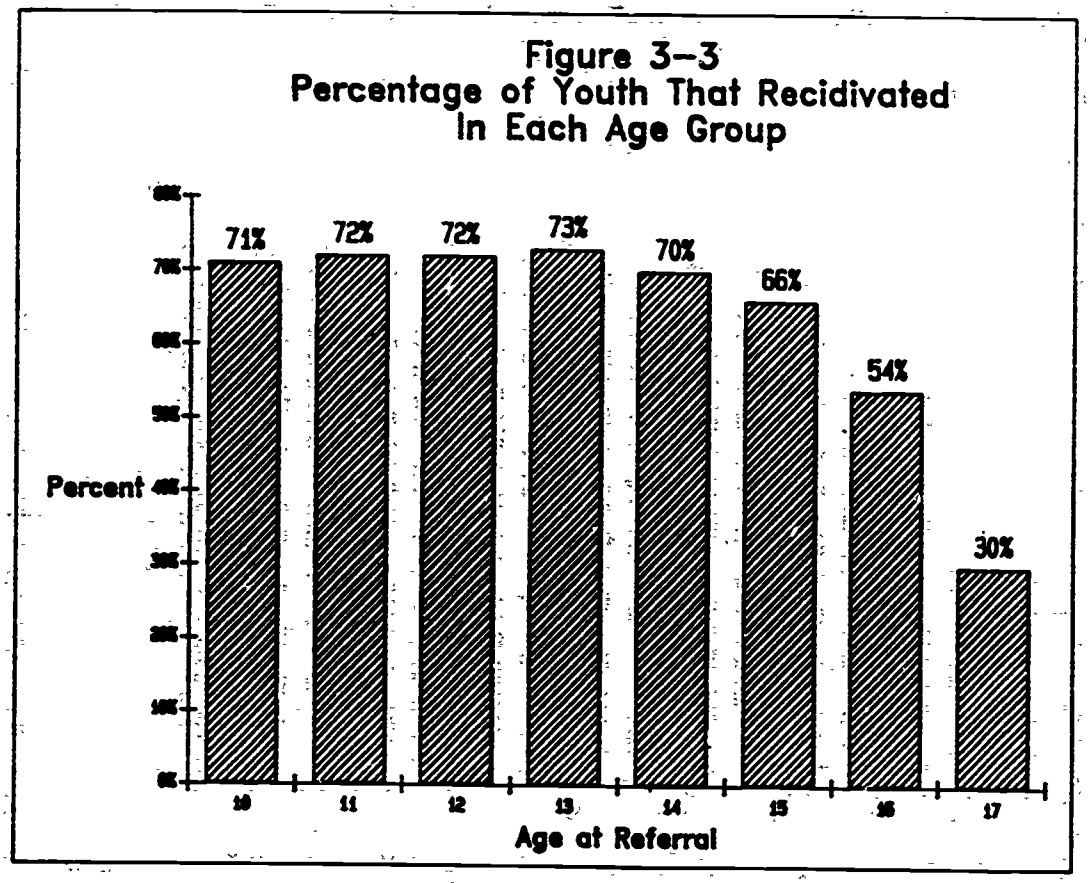


Figure 3–2
Percentage of Males and Females
Who Recidivated at Each
Referral Level
Percentage
Who
Recidivated
46
29
62
49
70
58
73
61
76
65
78
73
78
70
80
72
79
73
Male
Female
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
Referral Number



those with more than a 72 percent probability of recidivating, as chronic offenders. Using this standard, youth falling into 53 out of the 72 cells presented in Table 3-13 are chronic offenders. For example, the recidivism probabilities of all youth below the age of 16 with two referrals ranged from 75 to 86 percent. In fact the only youth who were likely to desist (i.e., those with less than a 50 percent recidivism probability) were 15- and 16- year-olds referred for the first time and most 17-year-olds. Obviously this does not imply that the younger juveniles were more likely to continue their involvement in law-violating behavior. The lower juvenile recidivism rates for the older youth are a direct consequence of their aging out of the juvenile, into the adult, justice system. Therefore, conclusions based on a composite distribution of recidivism probabilities which ignores age effects, such as Wolfgang's chronic offender curve, distort the reality of delinquent careers.

Direct comparison across age groups are also somewhat misleading because of the differing time periods they have remaining in their juvenile careers. To control in part for the biasing impact of age on the probability of subsequent juvenile court referral, the probabilities that youth would return to the juvenile court within a two year period (instead of until their eighteenth birthday) were developed (see Table 3-14). Even after adding this restriction it is unfair to compare the recidivism probabilities of those 15 and below with those 16 and above because of the limited time the older youth were at risk of juvenile court referral. However, it does permit straightforward comparisons of those in the under 16 age categories. As Table 3-14 shows, within the 10- to 15-year-old age groups

Table 3-13

Percentage of Youth That Recidivated at Each Referral Point Controlling for Age at Referral

Age at Referral	Number of Court Referrals 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Across All Referral Points
10	61%	84%	96%	97%	99%	96%	93%	94%	95%	71%
11	60%	85%	91%	92%	98%	99%	99%	96%	100%	72%
12	59%	83%	89%	97%	98%	95%	98%	96%	98%	72%
13	57%	82%	90%	93%	95%	97%	96%	98%	98%	73%
14	53%	77%	86%	91%	92%	94%	96%	95%	95%	70%
15	45%	69%	80%	84%	89%	89%	91%	93%	92%	66%
16	33%	55%	68%	73%	77%	81%	82%	83%	86%	54%
17	16%	27%	36%	41%	45%	48%	50%	53%	51%	30%
All Ages	41%	59%	67%	71%	74%	77%	77%	79%	79%	56%
Males										
10	65%	86%	95%	97%	99%	96%	*96%	*93%	*95%	75%
11	66%	86%	91%	93%	99%	99%	99%	96%	*100%	77%
12	65%	84%	90%	98%	98%	95%	98%	97%	97%	78%
13	64%	85%	93%	95%	95%	97%	97%	98%	99%	79%
14	60%	81%	90%	94%	94%	95%	97%	97%	96%	77%
15	52%	75%	84%	87%	92%	92%	93%	94%	94%	72%
16	39%	60%	71%	76%	80%	83%	84%	84%	87%	60%
17	18%	30%	37%	42%	46%	49%	55%	55%	52%	33%
All Ages	46%	62%	70%	73%	76%	78%	78%	80%	79%	61%
Females										
10	45%	*68%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	49%
11	44%	82%	*87%	--	--	--	--	--	--	52%
12	45%	76%	85%	94%	--	--	--	--	--	55%
13	43%	74%	83%	84%	94%	93%	*91%	--	--	57%
14	39%	67%	74%	81%	83%	87%	86%	85%	*87%	54%
15	32%	54%	65%	71%	75%	76%	76%	85%	80%	46%
16	21%	38%	51%	51%	52%	67%	66%	69%	77%	32%
17	9%	17%	23%	26%	30%	44%	37%	38%	44%	15%
All Ages	29%	49%	58%	61%	65%	72%	70%	71%	73%	40%

* Based on less than 50 observations per cell.

-- Less than 20 observations per cell.

Table 3-14

Percentage of Youth That Recidivated Within Two Years at Each Referral Point Controlling for Age at Referral

Age at Referral	Number of Court Referrals									Across All Referral Points
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	25%	55%	79%	83%	91%	93%	*80%	*90%	*95%	41%
11	29%	60%	77%	83%	88%	94%	95%	88%	*97%	47%
12	35%	66%	76%	89%	93%	90%	91%	95%	95%	55%
13	41%	71%	81%	88%	90%	93%	93%	94%	95%	61%
14	43%	69%	79%	86%	87%	90%	93%	91%	92%	63%
15	42%	66%	77%	82%	87%	87%	90%	91%	92%	63%
Males										
10	27%	57%	79%	84%	91%	93%	*82%	*90%	*95%	45%
11	31%	61%	76%	84%	89%	93%	94%	88%	*97%	51%
12	39%	66%	76%	90%	93%	92%	91%	96%	95%	59%
13	45%	72%	83%	90%	90%	93%	95%	95%	96%	66%
14	48%	71%	82%	89%	90%	92%	95%	94%	94%	68%
15	48%	71%	81%	85%	90%	90%	92%	93%	93%	69%
Females										
10	16%	*31%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	20%
11	20%	54%	*81%	--	--	--	--	--	--	30%
12	28%	65%	81%	80%	--	--	--	--	--	39%
13	34%	66%	75%	78%	91%	91%	*82%	*93%	--	48%
14	34%	62%	70%	77%	79%	82%	83%	77%	*83%	48%
15	29%	51%	63%	69%	73%	74%	74%	81%	80%	44%

* Based on less than 50 observations per cell.

-- Less than 20 observations per cell.

the probability of recidivating within two years increased with age. Fifteen-years-olds were more likely to recidivate within the following two year period than were 10-year-olds (63 compared to 41 percent recidivism rates); while, as Table 3-13 shows, their probabilities of returning to juvenile court at anytime in the future were more equal (71 compared to 66 percent). But applying the Wolfgang et al. definition of a chronic offender (a 72 percent probability of recidivating) to the two-year recidivism time period, the data clearly show that youth referred to juvenile court for a third time before their sixteenth birthday could be classified as chronic offenders. Even those with two referrals nearly made the cut.

What are the implications of these findings for the juvenile court? First, the recidivism probabilities of most youth who come before the juvenile court for a second or, especially, a third time are very high - at the chronic offender level. These data show that this is true for those under sixteen years of age and would probably be true for older youth if referrals to the adult system could be included. If a court knows that it is likely to handle a youth again and again, the court should not delay in providing interventions and sanctions. In many court systems dispositions progress in severity and cost in small steps. But if a court adopts the position early in a career that a youth is likely to consume much more court time and resources and to continue the law-violating behavior, the progression in disposition severity could be accelerated. Earlier substantial involvement in the court careers of both young and old offenders should present the best opportunity for influencing future behavior by dealing with youth who are more amenable to juvenile court treatment.

Long versus Short Careers

In the 1945 Philadelphia cohort 18 percent of the males arrested (those with five or more arrests) were responsible for over 50 percent of all arrests. The court data also indicate that a small percent of youth were responsible for a large proportion of the court activity. Sixteen percent of all youth referred, those with four or more referrals in their careers, generated 51 percent of all the juvenile court cases. In other words, one-sixth of all youth referred were involved in more than one-half of all the courts' delinquency and status offense referrals. Males were far more likely to have careers with four or more referrals than were females. The 20 percent of all male careers that contained four or more referrals were responsible for 56 percent of all male referrals. In comparison, only 8 percent of all females referred had four or more referrals but they were responsible for 29 percent of all female referrals. For females the 29 percent that recidivated (those with more than one referral in their court career) were responsible for 58 percent of all female referrals.

If the cafeteria model of delinquent behavior were correct, if youth commit a wide range of law-violating behavior in no particular pattern, then short careers should contain the same types of offenses as long careers. If the cafeteria model accurately reflects the behavior of youth, then youth with four or more referrals should be expected to generate 51 percent of the cases in each offense group. However, there were clear variations from this pattern (see Table 3-15).[5] Youth with four or more referrals in their careers were responsible for a disproportionate number of cases involving a charge of motor vehicle theft (70 percent), robbery (67 percent), burglary (66 percent), rape (64 percent), murder (61 percent), and aggravated assault (61 percent) and less responsible for cases involving a shoplifting charge (31 percent) or a status liquor law violation (40 percent).

[5] It is helpful in studying this table to use the 51 percent point as a benchmark to assess which offense categories were more or less likely to be found in short and long careers.

Table 3-15

Proportion of All Referrals Generated by Youth with Four or More Referrals

	Maricopa	Utah	Combined
ALL CASES	45.7%	54.8%	50.8%
INDEX VIOLENT CASES	**61.4**	**67.6**	**63.3**
Murder & non-negligent manslaughter	54.4	72.7	61.1
Forcible rape	59.4	68.3	64.3
Robbery	64.3	72.1	66.7
Aggravated assault	59.8	63.7	60.9
INDEX PROPERTY CASES	**44.8**	**56.5**	**50.1**
Burglary	61.0	74.9	65.8
Larceny-theft	35.9	48.4	41.7
Shoplifting	25.8	37.8	31.4
Other larceny-theft	49.0	61.9	55.1
Motor vehicle theft	62.2	75.3	70.3
Arson	49.8	59.0	51.5
NONINDEX DELINQUENCY CASES	**47.4**	**55.6**	**52.2**
Person	48.9	54.8	51.6
Property	43.3	56.2	50.1
Drugs	43.9	58.0	51.6
Public Order	54.1	54.6	54.4
STATUS CASES	**42.6**	**51.5**	**48.1**
Running away	45.1	54.5	48.8
Truancy	49.2	53.9	53.2
Incorrigibility	68.2	58.5	59.6
Liquor offenses	30.3	44.9	40.0
Curfew violation	48.1	54.2	50.0

Differences in the content of short versus long careers are evidence against the cafeteria model of delinquent behavior. The nature of a juvenile's delinquent career is related to its length. The finding that longer careers contained a larger proportion of serious offenses is consistent with a developmental model of career progression, although this finding alone is not sufficient evidence to support the model. (A developmental model would also predict that within a career the probability of serious offending increases with referral number. The sequential ordering of offenses within a career will be studied in the next chapter.)

Conclusions

One-third of all youth in the birth cohort were referred to juvenile court at least once before their eighteenth birthday for a delinquent or status offense. More specifically, nearly one-half of all males and one-fifth of all females in the birth cohort had a delinquent or status offense record with the juvenile courts in this study. Only 5 percent of all juvenile court careers contained a referral for an index violent offense, about half of all careers contained a referral for an index property offense, and nearly 40 percent of all careers contained a status offense referral. If a youth recidivated, he or she was most likely to return to court for a similar offense. The only exception was youth whose first referral was for the relatively rare index violent offense; these youth were most likely to return charged with an index property offense, but the most likely of all first referral groups to have another index violent offense in their careers. These findings indicate that juvenile court careers reflect a degree of specialization in law-violating behavior.

The probability of beginning a juvenile court career increased with age throughout the juvenile years for males and peaked at age 16 for females. Most court careers ended with the first referral, but about 4 of every 10 youth recidivated. Youth who began their careers at younger ages had careers containing a larger number of referrals and a higher percentage of serious offenses. The larger number of referrals for these youth appears to be the direct result of having more time at risk of juvenile court referral and not that they were more criminally active, since the yearly rates of referral were constant across all age of onset groups.

The recidivism probabilities were extremely high for most youth with two or more referrals. In fact, recidivism probabilities were in the "chronic offender" range for all youth below the age of 16 who had at least one prior referral to juvenile court. This high level of recidivism is emphasized by the finding that the only youth who were likely to desist (i.e., recidivism probabilities less than 50 percent) were 15- and 16-year olds referred for the first time and most 17-year-olds. Therefore, juvenile court personnel can be reasonably certain that most of the younger youth they process, regardless of the youth's number of prior referrals, will return to the juvenile court.

The higher percentage of serious offenses in the longer careers supports a developmental model of delinquent behavior. As other studies have found, a small percentage of youth were responsible for a majority of the officially recognized law-violations. In the jurisdictions under study, one-sixth of all youth referred (those with 4 or more court referrals) were involved in over half of all juvenile court cases. These offenders were also disproportionately responsible for the motor vehicle theft, robbery, burglary, rape, murder, and aggravated assault cases handled by the courts.

Chapter 4

Development of Juvenile Court Careers

A frustration in working with large longitudinal data bases is the inability of available statistical techniques to handle the interrelationships of the various components of a career simultaneously. When reviewing the court history of a single youth, his or her court referrals (their characteristics, order and timing) can be assimilated to develop a detailed picture of this court career. But transferring this approach to the study of a large number of careers so that generalizations can be developed is, as Bursik (1980) points out, far from a clean process and loses the rich flavor of the case study. Instead those who work with large numbers of case histories are forced to study various aspects of a career independently. These results can be combined into a composite picture, but the researcher (and the reader) is often left wishing that more satisfactory techniques were available.

In this section various dimensions of a court career will be studied. The analyses will address the following questions:

> Did the reasons for referral to juvenile court change as the career developed? Were offenses referred early in a court career different from those later in the career? Did the likelihood of an index violent referral increase as the career progressed?
>
> Is there any indication of specialization within a career? Did youth tend to commit the same types of offenses or is a cafeteria model of law-violating indicated?
>
> Is the likelihood of a court referral for a specific offense affected by the number of prior court referrals in a career? For example, is a youth with four prior referrals (regardless of the actual nature of these referrals) more likely to be referred next for an index violent offense than a youth with only one prior referral?
>
> If a violent offense referral was part of a career, did the first violent offense occur early or late in the career or was there no pattern?

Offense Progression in Juvenile Court Careers

To study offense progressions in delinquent careers, Wolfgang et al. (1972) calculated the conditional probabilities that a youth arrested at time k-1 would be rearrested at time k for a specific offense or would desist from further arrests (see Table 4-1). Regression equations predicting offense-specific conditional probabilities (for the second through fifteenth offense) were developed using offense number as the indepeiident variable. Results showed that the actual regression slopes were small compared to the absolute magnitudes of the conditional probabilities, but the overall probability of rearrest did increase significantly with the number of prior referrals. Within specific offense categories the probabilities of arrest for an injury (primarily index violent), theft or damage (together primarily index property) offense did not increase with the length of the youth's prior arrest record, while the arrest probabilities for a nonindex offense or a combination (more than one index or an index and nonindex) offense did. Wolfgang et al. concluded that, because of the "near-zero regression coefficients," the probability of committing any specific type of offense was virtually unchanged from the second to the fifteenth arrest.

Table 4-1

Conditional Probability of Committing a Kth Offense by Type of Offense Given that a Youth Committed a K-1 Offense

(Abstracted from Delinquency in a Birth Cohort, p. 162)

Number of Offenses	Probability					
	Nonindex	Injury	Theft	Damage	Combination	All Offenses
1	.6547	.0760	.1393	.0725	.0576	.----
2	.3430	.0455	.0794	.0222	.0458	.5359
3	.4044	.0483	.1246	.0236	.0499	.6508
4	.4439	.0736	.1238	.0248	.0503	.7164
5	.4320	.0657	.1313	.0264	.0668	.7222
6	.4705	.0526	.1435	.0128	.0622	.7416
7	.4409	.0925	.1398	.0387	.0796	.7915
8	.4511	.0815	.1440	.0163	.0734	.7663
9	.4787	.0887	.1241	.0177	.0887	.7979
10	.4489	.1111	.1956	.0089	.0622	.8267
11	.4624	.0645	.1559	.0054	.1022	.7904
12	.4830	.0816	.0884	.0544	.0952	.8026
13	.4068	.0593	.1441	.0254	.0932	.7288
14	.5233	.1163	.0814	.0349	.1279	.8838
15	.4474	.0263	.1316	.0000	.0921	.6974

****

Results of Regression Analyses
of Conditional Probabilities with Referral Number

Offense	Average Conditional Probability	Slope	Pearson Correlation	Significance Level
Nonindex	0.4454	0.00593	0.5847	0.028
Injury	0.0720	0.00133	0.2188	0.452
Theft	0.1291	0.00065	0.0879	0.765
Damage	0.0222	-0.00019	-0.0571	0.846
Combination	0.0778	0.00485	0.8651	0.000
All Offenses	0.7466	0.01257	0.6210	0.018

Wolfgang et al. ended their analyses of conditional probabilities of arrest by stating:

> ... The probability of committing an offense, when classified by type, changed very little over offense number. The variations in the probability distributions by offense type was surprisingly small.
>
> This finding was unexpected, for one would think that, if more serious offenses (index offenses) are likely to appear among the later offenses in a delinquent career, the probability distributions of property and bodily offenses would shift noticeably as the number of offenses increases, thereby reflecting a propensity toward the commission of more serious offenses. In short, one might expect the probability of committing an index offense to increase more or less directly with offense number. Particularly for index offenses such was not the case. Thus, we may suggest that this process which generates these offense-specific (by type) probability distributions operates essentially in the same manner at each offense number. This suggestion is an important one, for, if it is true, we are implying that the probability of being involved in a particular type of offensive behavior is independent of the number of offenses that a juvenile has committed. We may say simply, as an example, that a boy is no more likely at, say, the eleventh offense to be involved in a violent act than he was at the fifth. (pages 174-175)

In contrast, as the following will show, the patterns found in the juvenile court careers are what Wolfgang et al. had expected.

The 69,504 court careers were analyzed to investigate changes in the nature of referral offense as a career lengthened. Paralleling the Wolfgang et al. analyses, Table 4-2 reports (except for the first referral) the conditional probability of being referred for a kth referral for a specific offense given that the youth had been referred for a k-1 referral. (The first referral figures are simply the proportion of first referrals that fell into each offense category.) Correlations of the overall (the compliment of desistance) and the offense-specific conditional probabilities with referral number were developed. As with the arrest data, the overall probability of court referral (the compliment of desistance) increased significantly with referral number; for example, a youth with five prior court referrals was nearly twice as likely to recidivate as a first-time offender. But unlike the arrest results, the offense-specific conditional probabilities of recidivating increased significantly for each of the three delinquency categories: index violent, index property and nonindex delinquency. This pattern was observed independently in both jurisdictions. In contrast, the probability of a status offense referral did not increase with referral number. However, a jurisdictional difference was observed; the probability of a status offense referral did increase in Maricopa County but not in Utah, reflecting the Utah court's greater involvement with status offense behaviors throughout a career.[6]

The relative change in the conditional probabilities with increasing referrals was most dramatic for index violent offenses. A youth with eight prior referrals was more than 3 times as likely to be referred for an index violent offense as was a youth with only one referral (0.0316 versus 0.0093) and twice as likely as a youth with two prior referrals (0.0316 versus 0.0160). A youth with eight prior referrals was about twice as likely to be referred for an index property offense as was a youth with only one referral (0.2801 versus 0.1479) but only 40 percent more likely than a youth with two prior referrals (0.2801 versus 0.2040). In comparison, after the second referral the probability that a youth would be referred for a status offense remained relatively constant.

[6] Each analysis reported in this chapter included a test for jurisdictional differences. Other than the one noted here, no meaningful jurisdictional differences were found.

Table 4-2

Conditional Probability of a Kth Court Referral by Type of Offense Given that a Youth had a K-1 Referral: All Offenders

Referral Number	Probability: Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	Desistance
1	.0162	.4236	.3029	.2573	.----
2	.0093	.1479	.1377	.1169	.5883
3	.0160	.2040	.1952	.1737	.4112
4	.0213	.2336	.2322	.1880	.3249
5	.0228	.2434	.2545	.1938	.2856
6	.0236	.2574	.2748	.1890	.2551
7	.0274	.2579	.2941	.1900	.2306
8	.0298	.2691	.2931	.1823	.2257
9	.0316	.2801	.2848	.1925	.2110
10	.0341	.2914	.2844	.1779	.2123

****

Results of Correlational Analyses
of Conditional Probabilities with Referral Number (2-10)

Offense	Average Conditional Probability	Pearson Correlation	Significance Level
Index Violent	0.0240	0.9735	0.000
Index Property	0.2428	0.9211	0.000
Nonindex Delinquency	0.2501	0.8702	0.002
Status	0.1782	0.5432	0.131
Desistance	0.3050	-0.8643	0.003

A study of the actual magnitude of the conditional probabilities shows that the likelihood of a subsequent juvenile court referral for an index violent offense was never very high. In fact, it was the least probable of any of the five events under study. Even after nine previous referrals the odds that a youth would be referred for an index violent offense was less than 1 in 30. Throughout a court career the most likely referrals were for either an index prope ty or a nonindex delinquency offense. After a third referral the odds stayed about 1 in 4 that the youth would return charged with index property. The same odds held for a nonindex delinquency offense. After the second referral the odds of a youth being referred for a status offense stayed relatively constant at about 1 in 5.

Table 4-3

Profile of the Types of Offenses Referred at Each Referral Level: All Offenders

Referral Number	Number and Percentage of Referrals in Each Offense Category: Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	Total
1	1,127 1.6%	29,444 42.4%	21,052 30.3%	17,881 25.7%	69,504
2	643 2.2	10,277 35.9	9,569 33.4	8,124 28.4	28,613
3	457 2.7	5,836 34.6	5,585 33.2	4,969 29.5	16,847
4	359 3.2	3,936 34.6	3,912 34.4	3,167 27.8	11,374
5	259 3.2	2,768 34.1	2,895 35.6	2,204 27.1	8,126
6	192 3.2	2,092 34.6	2,233 36.9	1,536 25.4	6,053
7	166 3.6	1,561 33.5	1,780 38.2	1,150 24.7	4,657
8	139 3.9	1,253 34.7	1,365 37.9	849 23.5	3,606
9	114 4.0	1,101 35.5	1,027 36.1	694 24.4	2,845
10	97 4.3	829 37.0	809 36.1	506 22.6	2,241

Homogeneity of Offense Distributions: All Offenders
(First Versus Second to Ninth Versus Tenth Referral)

Transition Comparison	Chi-square	Significance at 0.05 Level
1st-2nd	370.98	Yes
2nd-3rd	19.11	Yes
3rd-4th	14.16	Yes
4th-5th	3.38	No
5th-6th	5.80	No
6th-7th	3.78	No
7th-8th	2.55	No
8th-9th	2.15	No
9th-10th	2.83	No

Table 4-4A

Conditional Probability of a Kth Court Referral by Type of Offense Given that a Youth had a K-1 Referral: Male Offenders

Referral Number	Probability: Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	Desistance
1	.0207	.4072	.3512	.2209	.----
2	.0119	.1737	.1643	.1140	.5361
3	.0185	.2243	.2107	.1638	.3827
4	.0244	.2529	.2427	.1758	.3042
5	.0249	.2624	.2617	.1834	.2676
6	.0262	.2736	.2797	.1795	.2410
7	.0291	.2724	.2965	.1771	.2248
8	.0313	.2859	.2933	.1731	.2164
9	.0329	.2959	.2824	.1855	.2033
10	.0344	.3058	.2822	.1714	.2062

****

Results of Correlational Analyses of Conditional Probabilities with Referral Number (2-10)

Offense	Average Conditional Probability	Pearson Correlation	Significance Level
Index Violent	0.0260	0.9285	0.000
Index Property	0.2603	0.9216	0.000
Nonindex Delinquency	0.2571	0.8494	0.000
Status	0.1693	0.5946	0.091
Desistance	0.2869	-0.8634	0.003

To explore the changes in the nature of referrals with increasing referral number in more detail, the differences between offense profiles within consecutive pairs of referral points were tested. Table 4-3 represents the number and proportion of court referrals at each referral level that fell into each of the four general offense categories. The profile of cases at the kth referral level was compared with profile of cases at the next (the k+1) level using the chi-square statistic to assess changes in the offense profile with increasing referral number. The chi-square statistic shows that the offense profiles did not differ significantly above the fourth referral, while first referrals differed from second, second from third, and third from fourth. The trends seen within each category show a relatively consistent pattern. With increasing referral number, the proportion of cases charged with an index violent offense increases monotonically. After an initial decline between the first and second referrals, the proportion of index property cases remained relatively constant. The proportion of nonindex delinquency cases gradually increased with referral number, while status offense proportions peaked at the third referral and gradually decreased thereafter. Index violent and nonindex delinquent offenses made up a greater proportion of referrals for youth with 4 or more

Table 4-4B

Conditional Probability of a Kth Referral by Type of Offense Given that a Youth had a K-1 Referral: Female Offenders

Referral Number	Probability: Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	Desistance
1	.0061	.4610	.1927	.3402	.---
2	.0032	.0890	.0770	.1234	.7074
3	.0068	.1303	.1390	.2095	.5144
4	.0070	.1451	.1840	.2441	.4198
5	.0109	.1385	.2152	.2507	.3847
6	.0065	.1516	.2428	.2512	.3479
7	.0143	.1469	.2753	.2882	.2753
8	.0177	.1319	.2913	.2579	.3012
9	.0197	.1352	.3070	.2563	.2817
10	.0314	.1451	.3059	.2431	.2745

****

Results of Correlational Analyses of Conditional Probabilities with Referral Number (2-10)

Offense	Average Conditional Probability	Pearson Correlation	Significance Level
Index Violent	0.0131	0.9109	0.001
Index Property	0.1348	0.5413	0.132
Nonindex Delinquency	0.2264	0.9632	0.000
Status	0.2360	0.6667	0.050
Desistance	0.3897	-0.8823	0.002

referrals, while the relative proportions of index property and status offense referrals were greater in the earlier stages of a career.

Sex differences in the developmental characteristics of court careers were investigated. The conditional probabilities of subsequent court referral were developed for males and females independently (see Tables 4-4A and 4-4B). The significance patterns in the correlations of the conditional probabilities of referral for index violent, nonindex delinquent, and status offenses with referral number were shared by both males and females. Unlike females (and unlike the findings in the arrest data) the probability that males would be referred for an index property offense also increased significantly with career length. More specifically, both males and females displayed large increases in the likelihood of referral for an index violent offense; in fact, the female increase was even more dramatic. A male with eight prior referrals was more than 3 times as likely to be referred for an index violent offense as was a male with only one referral (0.0344 versus 0.0119) and about twice as likely as a male with two prior referrals (0.0344 versus 0.0185). In comparison a female with

eight prior referrals was more than 6 times as likely to be referred for an index violent offense as was a female with only one referral (0.0197 versus 0.0032) and 3 times as likely as a female with two prior referrals (0.0197 versus 0.0068). For both sexes the likelihood of a subsequent index property or status offense referral leveled out around the third or fourth referral.

The profile of male and female referral offenses also changed with referral number (see Tables 4-5A and 4-5B). After the first few referrals the offense profiles of males and females remained constant. For both males and females, index violent referrals were proportionally more common as the number of referrals in the career increased. Male and, especially, female first referrals contained the highest proportion of index property offenses of any offense level. Tied to the large decline in the proportion of index property offenses from the first to the second referral, females showed a large increase in the proportions of nonindex delinquent and status offense referrals. The decrease in the proportion of female index property offenses is somewhat ambiguous given the large range of offenses that fall within this category, but it is clear that the impact of the number of prior referrals on the nature of subsequent referrals is found in both male and female career patterns.

In summary, while both the arrest and court data found that the probability of recidivating increased with referral number, increases in the conditional probabilities of subsequent delinquency offenses and changes in the types of offenses referred as a career lengthened were much greater in the court than in the arrest data. What could cause these differences? The fact that status offense referrals were included in the court data did not affect the comparability of the findings, because the probabilities and proportions of subsequent referrals for a status offense did not change significantly with referral number. The court and the arrest data also differ in that the court data contain information on female careers, but male and female careers shared many significant developmental characteristics. Consequently, neither the inclusion of status offenses nor sex differences can explain the differences found in the arrest and the court data. Unlike the patterns found by Wolfgang et al. (1972) in the arrest data, the court data showed changes in the nature of recidivism with increasing career length. The reasons for the different patterns in the two data sets remain unknown.

Offense Transition and Specialization

The previous section considered the impact of the number of court referrals on the nature of the subsequent referral. In this section the impact of referral offense on the probability and nature of subsequent referral will be investigated. In a major breakthrough in delinquency research, Wolfgang et al. (1972) introduced the techniques of stochastic modeling to assess the interaction of the number of prior arrests and the nature of the arrest at offense number k-1 on the nature of the arrest at offense k. With these techniques it is possible to determine whether the type of offense at arrest k is related to the type of offense at arrest k-1 and whether this relationship changes with the number of prior referrals in the career. Wolfgang et al. divided offenses into five groups: personal injury, theft, damage, combination and nonindex. A transition matrix was constructed containing the probability of committing offense j at time t given that offense i had been committed at time t-1 for each of the first eight transitions (i.e., 1st to 2nd referral, 2nd to 3rd referral, etc.). If these transition matrices were not significantly different from one another, if they were random variations of a single transition probability matrix, then it could be said that the transition probability of being arrested for a particular type of offense was independent of the previous number of arrests. In addition, if the transition probabilities in each row of the generating (or average transition) matrix could be shown to be significantly different from each of the other 4 rows, then it could be concluded that the nature of the next referral depends on the nature of the preceding referral.

Table 4-5A

Profile of the Types of Offenses Referred at Each Referral Level: Male Offenders

Referral Number	Number and Percentage of Referrals in Each Offense Category				
	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	Total
1	998	19,674	16,968	10,671	48,311
	2.1%	40.7%	35.1%	22.1%	
2	575	8,390	7,938	5,509	22,412
	2.6	37.4	35.4	24.6	
3	415	5,028	4,723	3,670	13,836
	3.0	36.3	34.1	26.5	
4	338	3,499	3,358	2,432	9,627
	3.5	36.3	34.9	25.3	
5	240	2,526	2,519	1,766	7,051
	3.4	35.8	35.7	25.0	
6	185	1,929	1,972	1,266	5,352
	3.5	36.0	36.8	23.7	
7	156	1,458	1,587	948	4,149
	3.8	35.1	38.3	22.8	
8	130	1,186	1,217	718	3,251
	4.0	36.5	37.4	22.1	
9	107	962	918	603	2,590
	4.1	37.1	35.4	23.3	
10	89	792	731	444	2,056
	4.3	38.5	35.6	21.6	

Homogeneity of Offense Distributions: Male Offenders
(First Versus Second to Ninth Versus Tenth Referral)

Transition Comparison	Chi-square	Significance at 0.05 Level
1st-2nd	100.87	Yes
2nd-3rd	25.47	Yes
3rd-4th	9.03	Yes
4th-5th	1.34	No
5th-6th	3.53	No
6th-7th	3.01	No
7th-8th	1.98	No
8th-9th	2.71	No
9th-10th	2.13	No

Table 4-5B

Profile of the Types of Offenses Referred at Each Referral Level: Female Offenders

Referral Number	Number and Percentage of Referrals in Each Offense Category				
	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	Total
1	129	9,770	4,084	7,210	21,193
	0.6%	46.1%	19.3%	34.0%	
2	68	1,887	1,631	2,615	6,201
	1.1	30.4	26.3	42.2	
3	42	808	862	1,299	3,011
	1.4	26.8	28.6	43.1	
4	21	437	554	735	1,747
	1.2	25.0	31.7	42.1	
5	19	242	376	438	1,075
	1.8	22.5	35.0	40.7	
6	7	163	261	270	701
	1.0	23.3	37.2	38.5	
7	10	103	193	202	508
	2.0	20.3	38.0	39.8	
8	9	67	148	131	355
	2.5	18.9	41.7	36.9	
9	7	48	109	91	255
	2.7	18.8	42.7	35.7	
10	8	37	78	62	185
	4.3	20.0	42.2	33.5	

Homogeneity of Offense Distributions: Female Offenders
(First Versus Second to Ninth Versus Tenth Referral)

Transition Comparison	Chi-square	Significance at 0.05 Level
1st-2nd	495.23	Yes
2nd-3rd	14.97	Yes
3rd-4th	5.54	No
4th-5th	5.67	No
5th-6th	2.95	No
6th-7th	3.32	No
7th-8th	1.68	No
8th-9th	0.12	No
9th-10th	1.02	No

Techniques to test for the stationarity of the transition matrices were outlined in Goodman (1962). Briefly, the procedure compares the corresponding rows in each consecutive pair of transition matrices using the chi-square statistic and sums the statistics for each row pair to determine if the two transition matrices are significantly different. This process is then repeated for each matrix pair. If no differences are found, then the transition matrices are said to be independent of offense number. If, in addition, it were found that the column proportions within the generating, or average, transition matrix were different (for example, that the probability of an index violent offense following an index violent offense was greater than an index violent offense following an index property offense), then it could be concluded that the probability of a subsequent referral for a specific offense is dependent on the nature of the preceding offenses but not on the number of prior referrals in the career. If, however, it was found that the transition matrices are not equal, then the transition probabilities are dependent on the number of prior offenses in a career, since the transition process cannot be modeled by a single matrix. If such is the case, then individual row pairs from these contingency tables can be tested to study changes in the offense probabilities across a career and a developmental model of delinquent careers is indicated.

Wolfgang et al. (1972) found that the offense transition matrices based on arrest data could be modeled by a constant generating matrix, indicating that the probability of committing offense j after offense i is unrelated to the number of prior arrests in a career. In reviewing the generating matrix, Wolfgang et al. (1972) felt that there were some indications of specialization, since for all offense types the conditional probability was greatest when it was preceded by a similar offense (e.g., those most likely to be arrested for an injury offense were those who had just previously been arrested for an injury offense). Similar findings were also obtained in Bursik (1980) using court data on 750 adjudicated delinquents from Cook County, Illinois, in Rojek and Erickson (1982) using arrest data on 1,180 youth from Pima County, Arizona, and in Smith and Smith (1984) who studied the arrest records of 767 institutionalized youth.

Bursik (1980) introduced to delinquency research a technique which tests the strength of specialization observed in a transition matrix. This procedure compares the number of youth that made a certain transition to the number of youth that would be expected to make the transition on the basis of chance alone. Though this appears to be a traditional chi-square comparison, Hauser (1978) has shown that the highly skewed marginal distributions (as is the case in offense transition matrices) can confound the statistic. Bursik (1980) and Rojek and Erickson (1982) both solved this problem by using a technique suggested by Haberman (1973). Haberman suggested that an analysis of cell probabilities could be improved by computing the adjusted standardized residual (ASR) for each cell:

$$ASR = [(\text{observed} - \text{expected})/SQRT(\text{expected})]/SQRT[(1 - a)(1 - b)]$$

$$\text{where} \quad a = (\text{row total})/(\text{table total})$$

$$\text{and} \quad b = (\text{column total})/(\text{table total})$$

The ASR statistic contains the traditional chi-square statistic plus an unbiased estimate of the standard deviation of the cell. The ASR, therefore, represents a standardized normal deviate which can be used to measure each cell's departure from independence.[7] When Bursik (1980) and Rojek

[7] It must be remembered that this procedure for measuring specialization is a very conservative approach, only testing for specialization in consecutive events. The actual level of specialization, if the offense patterns of the entire career could be assessed simultaneously, would, no doubt, be much stronger than this method would indicate.

and Erickson (1982) applied this procedure to their data, they found evidence of specialization for property offenders, but not for the nonindex delinquency category. Rojek and Erickson also found evidence of specialization by runaways.

Offense Transition and Specialization in Court Careers

The juvenile court data were analyzed using the procedures described above to assess the joint impact of the number and nature of prior referrals on a subsequent referral and to test for specialization in court careers. Table 4-6 contains the court referral transition matrices for the first through ninth transitions. Direct observation of these matrices reveals patterns similar to those found in the arrest data. Across all nine transitions the least common referral at time k was a referral for an index violent offense. However, the most likely to be referred for an index violent offense at time k were those youth who had been referred for an index violent offense at time k-1. In fact, this apparent specialization was seen within each offense grouping across all transitions. With minor deviations, those youth most likely to be referred for an index violent, index property, nonindex delinquency, or status offense were youth whose previous referral was for a similar offense. The least likely youth to be referred at time k for an index violent offense were those who were referred at k-1 for a status offense and the least likely to be referred for a status offense were those whose previous referral was for an index violent offense. Across all nine transitions youth charged at time k-1 for an index property offense or a nonindex delinquency offense were equally likely to be referred at time k for an index violent offense.

Using the analysis procedure developed by Haberman (1973) the question of offense specialization within a delinquent career was tested by studying the deviation from independence of the diagonal cells in each of the nine transition matrices. The diagonal elements in every transition matrix proved to be larger than expected by chance (see Table 4-7). Therefore specialization of offenses within court careers is strongly suggested. These broad patterns of specialization across all offense categories, while consistent with the findings of Smith and Smith (1984), differ from the results of Wolfgang et al. (1972) which found only a weak indication of specialization in the arrest data. And while Bursik (1980) and Rojek and Erickson (1982) also found some evidence for specialization in property and runaway referrals, they did not find the significant specialization in all the general offense categories.

There is a probable explanation for the greater degree of specialization in the court career data. The Wolfgang et al. data included a large percentage of arrests for relatively minor offenses. (Over 40 percent of the arrests in the Wolfgang et al. data set fell into the *All other offenses* category.) Many of these police contacts would never be referred to juvenile court. Therefore, the string of offenses in the arrest career would contain a relatively large percentage of minor offenses scattered throughout the career. Since these offenses do not appear in the court career, the court career data would be more homogeneous and specialization in the more serious offenses would be more apparent, especially since the statistical procedures measure specialization by comparing only contiguous offenses within the career.

To investigate changes in the likelihood of offense-to-offense transitions as careers lengthened, contiguous pairs of transition matrices were compared (see Table 4-8). Unlike the pattern found in the arrest data, the nature of the court referral transition matrices varied with the number of prior referrals. These differences were concentrated in the earlier transitions. After the sixth court referral the offense-to-offense transitions showed no significant differences, indicating that the offense transition patterns stabilized after that point.

Table 4-6

Court Referral Transition Probabilities: All Careers

Matrix 1: First Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	% that Desisted
Index Violent	521	.096	.359	.378	.167	53.8
Index Property	12,584	.025	.443	.315	.217	57.3
Nonindex Delinquency	8,645	.022	.329	.400	.249	58.9
Status	6,863	.013	.243	.284	.459	61.6

Matrix 2: Second Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	% that Desisted
Index Violent	375	.104	.365	.357	.173	41.7
Index Property	6,487	.030	.452	.304	.213	36.9
Nonindex Delinquency	5,354	.028	.316	.392	.264	44.0
Status	4,631	.015	.232	.298	.455	43.0

Matrix 3: Third Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	% that Desisted
Index Violent	298	.144	.315	.372	.168	34.8
Index Property	4,233	.030	.470	.312	.188	27.5
Nonindex Delinquency	3,620	.036	.304	.404	.256	35.2
Status	3,223	.017	.233	.316	.433	35.1

Matrix 4: Fourth Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	% that Desisted
Index Violent	254	.169	.335	.354	.142	29.2
Index Property	2,982	.025	.465	.310	.199	24.2
Nonindex Delinquency	2,664	.033	.292	.421	.254	31.9
Status	2,226	.023	.233	.341	.403	29.7

Matrix 5: Fifth Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	% that Desisted
Index Violent	183	.126	.328	.383	.164	29.3
Index Property	2,195	.036	.469	.333	.162	20.7
Nonindex Delinquency	2,082	.029	.311	.421	.239	28.1
Status	1,593	.018	.223	.348	.410	27.7

Table 4-6
(continued)

Court Referral Transition Probabilities: All Careers

Matrix 6: Sixth Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	% that Desisted
Index Violent	138	.101	.391	.348	.159	28.1
Index Property	1,684	.038	.454	.351	.176	19.5
Nonindex Delinquency	1,686	.035	.288	.454	.223	24.5
Status	1,149	.025	.223	.356	.396	25.2

Matrix 7: Seventh Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	% that Desisted
Index Violent	110	.127	.282	.409	.182	33.7
Index Property	1,272	.036	.483	.322	.159	18.5
Nonindex Delinquency	1,351	.044	.292	.449	.215	24.1
Status	873	.023	.245	.347	.385	24.1

Matrix 8: Eighth Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	% that Desisted
Index Violent	94	.128	.309	.426	.138	32.4
Index Property	1,042	.042	.464	.311	.183	16.8
Nonindex Delinquency	1,034	.041	.320	.414	.225	24.2
Status	675	.024	.247	.348	.381	20.5

Matrix 9: Ninth Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status	% that Desisted
Index Violent	76	.118	.289	.395	.197	33.3
Index Property	833	.042	.480	.318	.160	17.5
Nonindex Delinquency	788	.049	.313	.426	.211	23.3
Status	544	.026	.294	.327	.353	21.6

It is possible that the first few transition matrices differ from one another because of the changing combination of career lengths across the matrices. For example, the first transition matrix contains information from all court careers with two or more referrals, the second transition matrix contains information from all court careers with three or more referrals, the third transition matrix contains information from all court careers with four or more referrals, and so on. It is possible that the shorter careers contained different transition patterns than the longer careers; and by combining them in varying proportions over the first few transition matrices, an artificial mixture of transition

Table 4-7

Analyses of the Diagonal Structures of Transition Matrices: All Careers
(Adjusted Standardized Residuals)

Transition	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status
1st	11.42	26.15	15.36	36.17
2nd	9.27	22.89	11.36	28.08
3rd	11.28	21.46	9.19	23.14
4th	12.67	18.03	8.48	16.46
5th	7.36	15.02	6.05	16.69
6th	4.23	12.96	7.57	13.50
7th	4.91	12.59	6.78	11.95
8th	4.40	9.20	4.44	9.48
9th	3.28	8.32	4.75	8.15

Table 4-8

Comparison of Transition Matrix Pairs: All Careers
(First versus Second through Eighth versus Ninth Transitions)

Transition Comparison	Chi-square	Significance at 0.05 Level
1st-2nd	22.92	Yes
2nd-3rd	25.75	Yes
3rd-4th	13.58	No
4th-5th	23.01	Yes
5th-6th	11.22	No
6th-7th	9.28	No
7th-8th	7.67	No
8th-9th	7.90	No

probabilities may have been created which appears to change when, in fact, the individual underlying processes did not. To test for this possibility, offense-to-offense transition matrices were developed using only information from careers containing five or more referrals (see Table 4-9). Comparisons of the pairs of transition matrices (see Table 4-10) show that for this select group the transition probabilities also changed significantly with the number of prior referrals during the early stages of the career.

Table 4-9

Transition Probabilities: All Careers with 5 or More Referrals

Matrix 1: First Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status
Index Violent	161	.093	.385	.379	.143
Index Property	3,911	.024	.496	.294	.187
Nonindex Delinquency	2,410	.019	.408	.344	.228
Status	1,644	.015	.280	.254	.451

Matrix 2: Second Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status
Index Violent	178	.090	.376	.354	.180
Index Property	3,446	.027	.484	.287	.202
Nonindex Delinquency	2,456	.030	.364	.364	.242
Status	2,046	.015	.283	.283	.438

Matrix 3: Third Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status
Index Violent	212	.132	.311	.363	.193
Index Property	3,166	.032	.483	.299	.186
Nonindex Delinquency	2,528	.034	.325	.391	.250
Status	2,220	.018	.255	.293	.435

Matrix 4: Fourth Transition

K-1/K	Number	Index Violent	Index Property	Nonindex Delinquency	Status
Index Violent	254	.169	.335	.354	.142
Index Property	2,982	.025	.465	.310	.199
Nonindex Delinquency	2,664	.033	.292	.421	.676
Status	2,226	.023	.233	.341	.898

Table 4-10

Comparison of Transition Matrix Pairs:
All Careers with 5 or More Referrals Only
(First versus Second through Third versus Fourth Transitions)

Transition Comparison	Chi-square	Significance at 0.05 Level
1st-2nd	23.19	Yes
2nd-3rd	17.37	No
3rd-4th	30.20	Yes

The source of the differences in the transition matrices can be studied by comparing corresponding rows within the transition matrices. Variations between corresponding (same offense) rows of the nine transition matrices can be tested by converting the conditional transition probabilities to case counts and by conducting a chi-square test on the resulting 9-by-4 matrix. The nonsignificant chi-square value for the transitions which began with an index violent offense indicated that youth who recidivated following an index violent referral were no more (or less) likely to be referred for an index violent, index property, nonindex delinquency or status offense if they had one or more prior referrals to juvenile court. But this was not true for the three other offense categories. Each of their transition patterns varied significantly with the number of prior referrals in the court career. In general, youth charged with either an index property, nonindex delinquency, or status offense were more likely to follow this referral with an index violent offense, and less likely to follow it with a status offense, as the number of prior referrals in their careers increased. This finding is consistent with the general pattern documented earlier that index violent referrals were more likely to occur in a career after a number of prior referrals.

Exploring this point more fully, Table 4-11 shows for index violent careers of various lengths the percentage of referrals at each referral point that involved an index violent offense. The general pattern in each row shows that as the careers developed, a greater percentage of referrals were for an index violent offense. Therefore, index violent referrals were more likely to occur later in a career. Hamparian et al. (1978) reported that the first violent arrest tended to occur early in the youth's officially recognized delinquent career. Analyses of court data contradict this finding. Table 4-12 shows the position of the first index violent offense referral in court careers of various lengths. The first occurrence of an index violent referral was more likely to be found toward the end of a court career. Without exception, a greater percentage of first referrals for an index violent offense were found in the last half of the court career. In addition, for most of the career lengths, the last referral was the most likely to be for an index violent offense. These data give strong support to a developmental model of delinquent behavior and contradict, to some extent, the cafeteria model of delinquent behavior.

Conclusions

The offense transition patterns found in the juvenile court careers in this study do not support a cafeteria model of delinquent careers. The court careers showed some degree of offense specialization. Even the relatively conservative test of the comparison of contiguous referrals showed that the youth most likely to be referred for any offense type was the youth who had just previously been referred for that offense. In addition, the more prior referrals in a career the greater was the likelihood that the youth would be referred for a delinquency offense and the more likely it was to be an index violent offense. Offense transition probabilities varied with the number of prior court referrals consistent with the pattern that court careers involve more serious offenses as they continue. The probability of being referred for an index violent, index property, nonindex delinquent or status offense following an index violent referral did not change with referral number. This, however, was not true for the three other offense categories. Youth charged with either an index property, nonindex delinquent, or status offense were more likely to follow this referral with an index violent offense, and less likely to follow it with a status offense, as the number of prior referrals in their careers increased.

In summary, the study of juvenile court referral offense patterns presents a picture of officially recognized delinquency which progresses from less to more serious behaviors in which the youth specializes in various types of behavior as their career unfolds.

Table 4-11

Occurrence of Index Violent Referrals within Index Violent Careers
(Percentage of Cases Referred for an Index Violent Offense)

Career Length (Number of Referrals)	Number of Careers	Referral Number									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	606	100.0									
2	454	45.6	59.0								
3	356	27.8	35.7	44.7							
4	272	19.9	25.7	31.6	38.6						
5	247	17.8	21.5	22.7	27.5	30.8					
6	206	15.0	14.1	19.9	29.6	23.3	26.2				
7	194	9.3	17.5	16.0	17.5	18.6	22.2	28.9			
8	136	9.6	8.8	11.8	16.9	18.4	11.8	18.4	33.1		
9	127	9.4	7.9	11.8	14.2	18.1	14.2	16.5	15.7	29.9	
10	701	6.1	5.7	7.6	7.1	7.3	8.7	9.1	10.6	10.8	13.3

Table 4-12

Position in Career of the First Referral for an Index Violent Offense
(Percentage of Careers)

Career Length (Number of Referrals)	Number of Careers	Referral Number									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	606	100.0									
2	454	45.6	54.4								
3	356	27.8	33.1	39.0							
4	272	19.9	23.5	26.8	29.4						
5	247	17.8	18.2	19.4	24.3	20.2					
6	206	15.0	13.1	17.0	22.8	15.0	17.0				
7	194	9.3	16.0	15.5	12.4	11.9	13.4	21.6			
8	136	9.6	8.8	10.3	14.0	15.4	8.1	14.0	19.9		
9	127	9.4	7.1	11.0	9.4	14.2	10.2	11.0	11.0	16.5	
10	110	6.4	8.2	5.5	8.2	9.1	11.8	8.2	11.8	8.2	22.7

Chapter 5

Juvenile Court Career Types

A Typology of Juvenile Court Careers

Throughout this report the study of delinquency court careers has focused on specific attributes of the careers: the effect of age of onset on career length and seriousness; the nature of the offense-to-offense transitions; and changes in the types of offenses referred as the career continues. In this chapter the overall composition of a juvenile court career will be studied by classifying court careers into one of fifteen career categories. This classification scheme translates the complete set of referral offenses in a career into a four-character binary code. The classification system enables the study of the overall offense character of juvenile court careers, although it does not retain information on the number and position of the individual offenses.

A four-character binary code summarizes the types of offenses referred within each juvenile court career. The first character stands for the existence in the career of one or more referrals for an index violent offense; the second binary character stands for the existence of one or more referrals for an index property offense; the third for the existence of one or more referrals for non-index delinquency offense; and the fourth for the existence of one or more referrals for a status offense. Therefore, a career with a binary code of '0101' would contain no index violent offense referrals, one or more index property referrals, no non-index delinquency referrals, and one or more status offense referrals. By definition this career contains at least two referrals (though it could contain many more) with the nature of the first or the last referral unknown, but limited to either an index property or status offense referral.

Frequency of Career Types

With this background Table 5-1 presents the career types for all youth in this study ordered from the most to the least common. While there were some jurisdictional and sex differences in their order, the three most common career types in each instance were careers which contained only one offense type, either only index property offenses (0100), only non-index delinquency offenses (0010), or only status offenses (0001). This high proportion of single offense type careers is, however, expected given that more than half of all youth referred to the juvenile courts were referred only once.

None of the seven most common career types included an index violent offense; careers containing an index violent referral were the least common of all juvenile court careers. Unlike the other three offense types, careers containing only index violent offenses (one or more) were not the most common example of an index violent offense career. The most common career containing an index violent offense was the career profile with the widest range of offenses, career type 1111 - the violent generalist. This pattern was found in both jurisdictions and for both sexes. To put this in perspective, if a gambler were forced to bet on the character of the delinquent court career knowing only that the youth was referred at some time for an index property offense, the most reasonable bet would be that the youth's career was limited to only index property referrals (career type 0100). The same holds true knowing only that the career contained a non-index delinquency (career type 0010) or status offense (career type 0001); the most reasonable bet would be that the youth's court career did not extend beyond the single offense category. But knowing a youth was referred at some time in

Table 5-1

Frequencies of Offense Profiles for All Careers
Using a Four Column Classification Scheme
(Index Violent / Index Property / Non-Index Delinquency / Status)

	Maricopa			Utah			Combined		
Index	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0100	7,285	4,903	12,188	4,374	2,994	7,368	11,659	7,897	19,556
0010	4,903	1,633	6,536	6,336	1,537	7,873	11,239	3,170	14,409
0001	3,199	2,506	5,705	4,012	3,203	7,215	7,211	5,709	12,920
0110	2,804	510	3,314	2,331	458	2,789	5,135	968	6,103
0111	1,808	303	2,111	2,887	601	3,488	4,695	904	5,599
0011	995	297	1,292	2,036	765	2,801	3,031	1,062	4,093
0101	1,265	508	1,773	1,079	673	1,752	2,344	1,181	3,525
1111	535	37	572	377	19	396	912	56	968
1101	440	30	470	151	12	163	591	42	633
1000	365	67	432	181	18	199	546	85	631
1100	254	31	285	58	5	63	312	36	348
1010	181	21	202	68	8	76	249	29	278
1011	97	15	112	76	9	85	173	24	197
1101	102	10	112	27	4	31	129	14	143
1001	60	10	70	25	6	31	85	16	101

his career for an index violent offense, the gambler's best bet would be that the youth was a law-violating generalist and referred to court for a wide range of offenses.

Table 5-2 presents an ordered list of career types for careers with two or more referrals. By removing the one-time offenders, the pattern of career types changes markedly. All careers containing an index violent referral were still less common than any of the nonviolent careers, but within these two divisions the least common career type was the youth who specialized in only one offense type. The three least frequent nonviolent career types for recidivists were 0100, 0010, and 0001, and the least frequent index violent career type was 1000 - or the youth who did only index violent offenses. Therefore, specialization, careers in which a youth was referred for only one type of offense, was comparatively rare in these juvenile court careers.

Table 5-3 presents an ordered list of career types for youth with four or more court referrals, the 16 percent of youth who have been shown to be responsible for over half of all court referrals. By far the most common career contained a referral in every offense category except index violent (career type 0111) - the nonviolent generalist. Thus, there was a tendency for these youth to be involved in a wide range of nonviolent law-violating behavior. True specialization was rare for youth with four or more referrals. Careers containing only index property, or only non-index delinquency, or only status offense referrals were not common for youth with four or more referrals. But these career types were each far more common than careers containing only index violent referrals. In fact within the 69,504 court careers studied, not one youth with four or more referrals had a career that contained only index violent referrals. As noted earlier, the most common career containing an index violent offense referral was the career profile of the violent generalist, career type 1111. This index

Table 5-2

Frequencies of Offense Profiles for All Careers with Two or More Referrals Using a Four Column Classification Scheme
(Index Violent / Index Property / Nonindex Delinquency / Status)

	Maricopa			Utah			Combined		
Index	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0110	2,804	510	3,314	2,331	458	2,789	5,135	968	6,103
0111	1,808	303	2,111	2,887	601	3,488	4,695	904	5,599
0011	995	297	1,292	2,036	765	2,801	3,031	1,062	4,093
0101	1,265	508	1,773	1,079	673	1,752	2,344	1,181	3,525
0100	1,365	463	1,828	617	251	868	1,982	714	2,696
0010	668	126	794	1,054	154	1,208	1,722	280	2,002
0001	314	263	577	717	608	1,325	1,031	871	1,902
1111	535	37	572	377	19	396	912	56	968
1110	440	30	470	151	12	163	591	42	633
1100	254	31	285	58	5	63	312	36	348
1010	181	21	202	68	8	76	249	29	278
1011	97	15	112	76	9	85	173	24	197
1101	102	10	112	27	4	31	129	14	143
1001	60	10	70	25	6	31	85	16	101
1000	15	4	19	6	0	6	21	4	25

Table 5-3

Frequencies of Offense Profiles for All Careers with Four or More Referrals Using a Four Column Classification Scheme
(Index Violent / Index Property / Nonindex Delinquency / Status)

	Maricopa			Utah			Combined		
Index	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0111	1,530	240	1,770	2,577	511	3,088	4,107	751	4,858
0110	991	89	1,080	891	105	996	1,882	194	2,076
0011	198	71	269	701	240	941	899	311	1,210
1111	535	37	572	377	19	396	912	56	968
0101	300	96	396	287	136	423	587	232	819
1110	371	23	394	136	9	145	507	32	539
0100	156	20	176	51	15	66	207	35	242
0001	13	20	33	63	76	139	76	96	172
1011	70	10	80	57	8	65	127	18	145
0010	34	1	35	75	4	79	109	5	114
1101	72	6	78	17	3	20	89	9	98
1100	59	3	62	10	1	11	69	4	73
1010	35	2	37	16	1	17	51	3	54
1001	3	1	4	2	0	2	5	1	6
1000	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

violent career was followed in frequency of occurrence by index violent careers containing referrals from three of the four offense categories (career types 1110, 1011, and 1101), then by careers containing two of the four offense categories (career types 1100, 1010, and 1001). The same relative pattern held for the nonviolent careers. Careers with at least one referral from each of the three nonviolent offense categories were the most common, followed by nonviolent careers containing referrals from two of the three nonviolent offense categories and, finally, careers which specialized in each nonviolent category.

Therefore, the youth who recidivated were involved in a wide range of law-violating behavior. Offense-specific specialization was rare for youth with more than one referral. For youth with four or more referrals, the most common career contained at least one referral from each of the three nonviolent offense categories, while the most common career type containing an index violent referral also contained referrals in each of the three nonviolent offense categories. Active juveniles tend to be generalists rather than specialists; but some specialization is indicated.

Comparisons of Expected and Observed Probabilities of Career Types

Considering both the fact that an index violent offense referral was a relatively rare event in these court careers and that many careers were very long, the finding that a 1111 career was the most common index violent career would be expected under the cafeteria (or random behavior) model of delinquency. Even if there were a moderate level of specialization, this would still be true. Under the cafeteria model of delinquent behavior, the probability of a youth committing a specific act is independent of the number of prior referrals. Therefore, given enough opportunities (enough referrals) eventually every youth would be referred for an index violent offense; and, if pure random chance is operating, this career is very likely to contain offenses from each of the other offense groups, even given the low probability of an index violent referral.

However, if there were a degree of specialization, the occurrence of 1111 careers would be less than predicted by a pure random behavior model. In fact, if there were true specialization, the 1111 career type would never be observed. The actual degree of specialization probably exists somewhere along the continuum from pure random behavior to pure specialization. The further the actual level of specialization is away from the point of pure random behavior on this continuum, the smaller will be the observed proportion of 1111 careers. If it is assumed that the probability of being referred for any one of the four general offense categories is constant across referral number for careers of various lengths, then the proportion of careers that fall into each of the fifteen career categories can be computed by calculating the independent joint probabilities of each career type. For example, in careers with four referrals the data showed the probability that any single referral for an index violent offense was 0.0242, for an index property referral (8, for a non-index delinquency offense 0.3368 and for a status offense 0.2831. Under a independent joint probabilities, 1.97 percent of careers with four referrals should fall into the career type 1111.[8] If delinquent behavior is not random, then the proportion of 1111 referrals should be less than predicted by the joint probability of independent events.

[8] For careers with only four referrals, there are 24 offense sequences that yield a career type of 1111. These 24 sequences have a total probability of occurrence under a random behavior model of

$$24 \times (0.0242 \times 0.3558 \times 0.3368 \times 0.2831) = 0.01970$$

In other words, under a random behavior model 1.97 percent of all careers containing 4 referrals should be classified as 1111 careers.

Table 5-4 and Figure 5-1 present separately the observed and expected probabilities of a 1111 career for careers having from four (the shortest career in which this career type could occur) to fifteen referrals. As the data show the actual occurrence of 1111 careers was, in each instance, significantly less than predicted by a model based on the independent joint probabilities of the offense-specific referrals. The differences were substantial with the observed proportion averaging only about 60 percent of the expected proportion of 1111 careers. Therefore, the offense characteristics of a court career did not follow a pattern of random occurrence.

The variations from the random occurrence model of delinquent behavior can be studied more completely by comparing the observed and expected probabilities of the other 14 career types. Table 5-5 presents the expected probability of occurrence for each career type under a model of random occurrence using the observed proportion of offense-specific referrals found in careers of various lengths. Obviously some career types are theoretically very unlikely, such as specialization in index violent offenses (career type 1000) given their low probability of occurrence. Specialization in each of the three nonviolent offense categories becomes very unlikely for careers containing more than four referrals. The most likely nonviolent career becomes the career containing at least one referral from each of the three nonviolent offense categories (career type 0111) for careers as short as four referrals. For careers with four or more referrals the most common index violent career is predicted to be the 1111 career type, with its likelihood of occurrence increasing to almost 1 in every 2 careers for careers with fifteen referrals. In fact, it is predicted under the random occurrence model that the two career types 0111 and 1111 will dominate the career patterns for careers containing five or more referrals. Theoretically, 71 percent of careers containing six referrals should fall into one of these two career types, with the percentage increasing gradually to 96 percent for careers with fifteen referrals.

With the expected probabilities of career types for careers of various lengths, it is possible to apply these proportions to the actual number of careers of various lengths in the cohort and calculate the number of careers of each type that should exist. By totaling these figures, the expected number of careers of each type can be developed. This was done and career types were rank ordered by their expected frequencies. The rank ordering under a random behavior model coincided with the observed rank ordering. In fact, the Spearman rank-order correlation of the expected and observed frequencies of each career type for careers containing more than one referral was 0.98 and for careers with four or more referrals 0.94. Therefore, a random behavior model of delinquent behavior fits the court referral data in terms of the relative occurrence of career types. However, the differences in the magnitude of the observed and expected proportions indicate situations where the random model of delinquent behavior fell short of predicting the actual frequency of specific career types.

The expected probability of each career type was developed individually for careers containing from two to fifteen referrals using each career length's proportion of referrals in each of the four offense categories as the generating base. These expected probabilities were compared to the observed probabilities of careers falling into each career type. The observed probabilities and the result of each t-test are presented in Table 5-6. By considering the sign and significance of the t-statistic and the value of the observed probability of career type, the data's variations from a true random occurrence model can be studied.

Focusing first on the shorter careers, specialization in all but index violent offenses (careers 0001, 0010, and 0100) was more predominant than expected; the t-tests are all positive with the observed values significantly greater than expected. This specialization reduced the observed probabilities of the more multiple-offense career types in the shorter careers. For careers which contain only two referrals, the probabilities of each of the three possible two-different-offense careers

Table 5-4

Probability of a 1111 Career for Careers of Various Lengths

Career Length (Number of Referrals)	Number of Careers	Probabilities Observed	Probabilities Expected	t-Statistic*
4	3,248	0.0111	0.0197	-3.53
5	2,073	0.0294	0.0574	-5.48
6	1,396	0.0559	0.1026	-5.75
7	1,051	0.0904	0.1520	-5.56
8	761	0.0999	0.1649	-4.83
9	604	0.1325	0.2173	-5.05
10	469	0.1535	0.2512	-4.89
11	354	0.1864	0.2833	-4.05
12	253	0.2174	0.3117	-3.24
13	226	0.2212	0.3464	-3.96
14	188	0.2340	0.3638	-3.70
15	146	0.2740	0.4699	-4.74

* All t-Statistics have $p < 0.005$

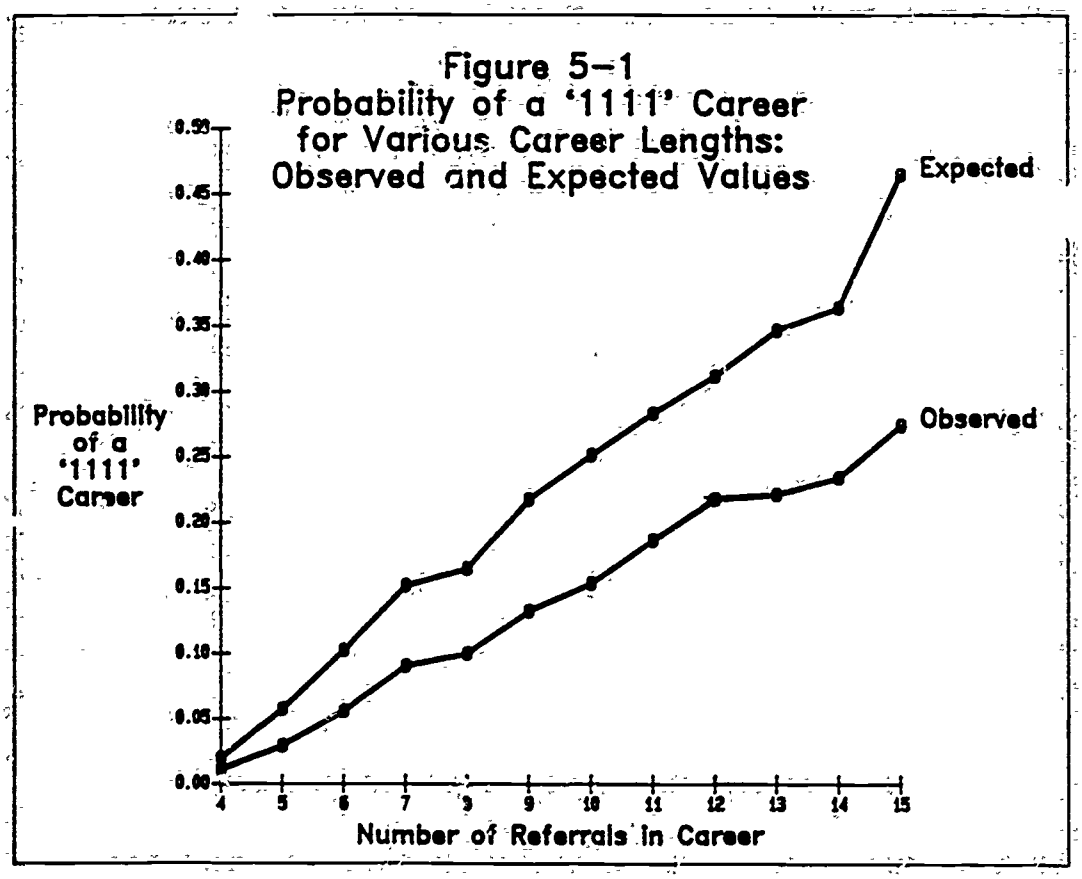


Table 5-5

Expected Probabilities of Offense Profiles Within Careers of Various Lengths under a Random Occurence Model

Career Length (# of Referrals)	Career Types (Index Violent / Index Property / Nonindex Delinquency / Status) 0001	0010	0011	0100	0101	0110	0111	1000	1001	1010	1011	1100	1101	1110	1111
2	.077	.112	.185	.136	.204	.246	.000	.000	.011	.014	.000	.015	.000	.000	.000
3	.025	.036	.179	.045	.201	.241	.205	.000	.007	.008	.014	.010	.015	.016	.000
4	.006	.013	.128	.016	.144	.201	.397	.000	.003	.004	.018	.005	.019	.025	.020
5	.002	.004	.082	.006	.097	.148	.526	.000	.001	.002	.019	.003	.022	.031	.057
6	.000	.002	.050	.002	.054	.120	.597	.000	.000	.001	.017	.001	.018	.035	.103
7	.000	.001	.027	.001	.033	.094	.628	.000	.000	.001	.013	.001	.015	.036	.152
8	.000	.000	.019	.000	.020	.071	.682	.000	.000	.000	.008	.000	.009	.026	.165
9	.000	.000	.010	.000	.013	.050	.672	.000	.000	.000	.006	.000	.008	.024	.217
10	.000	.000	.007	.000	.008	.032	.674	.000	.000	.000	.005	.000	.005	.018	.251
11	.000	.000	.002	.000	.005	.043	.635	.000	.000	.000	.002	.000	.004	.027	.283
12	.000	.000	.001	.000	.005	.020	.643	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.004	.014	.312
13	.000	.000	.001	.000	.002	.020	.612	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.002	.016	.346
14	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	.015	.604	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	.013	.364
15	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.015	.490	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	.021	.470

not involving an index violent offense (0011, 0101, 0110) were all less than expected. For the short careers, the small probabilities for careers containing an index violent offense made the study of their probabilities difficult; but within their scale of magnitude, there is some evidence for specialization beyond what would be expected by chance, though only the combination of an index violent and status offense within a career proved to be less likely than chance, unlike the more general pattern found in nonviolent careers.

True specialization became rare as the career length increased. However, the pattern of significances for the longer careers shows that they did not contain as heterogeneous a mix of offenses as expected, which could be interpreted as specialization within a broader, though restricted, range of behaviors. For example, for careers containing eight referrals, careers with a mix of all four offense types (1111) occurred less often than expected - a pattern found in careers of all lengths; but also occurring less than expected were careers containing referrals from all three nonviolent offense categories (0111). In comparison, the other career probabilities showed that youth were more likely than expected to restrict their behaviors to a smaller set of law-violating behaviors; four of the six possible careers containing two types of referrals occurred more often than chance, with the two which contained an index and a status offense occurring at expected levels. This restriction, or specialization within a set of offenses, is also seen in the fact that careers containing all but status offenses (1110) occurred more often than expected.

For extremely long careers, essentially only four career types were observed. The nonviolent career (0111) was the most common and occurred at chance levels. The next most common was the career that contained at least one referral from each offense group (1111) which occurred much less

Table 5-6

Observed Probabilities of Offense Profiles Within Careers of Various Lengths and Their Differences from Expected Probabilities Under a Random Occurence Model

Career Length (# of Referrals)	Career Types (Index Violent / Index Property / Nonindex Delinquency / Status)														
	0001	0010	0011	0100	0101	0110	0111	1000	1001	1010	1011	1100	1101	1110	1111
2	.116	.135	.158	.169	.157	.226	.000	.002	.007	.014	.000	.016	.000	.000	.000
	+	+	-	+	-	-	n/a	+	-	0	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
3	.066	.055	.187	.084	.157	.251	.135	.001	.003	.010	.010	.016	.008	.017	.090
	+	+	=	+	-	=	-	+	-	=	=	+	-	=	n/a
4	.036	.026	.163	.043	.121	.250	.278	.000	.002	.009	.013	.010	.007	.032	.011
	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	=	=	+	=	+	-	=	-
5	.015	.008	.231	.024	.104	.216	.380	.000	.000	.005	.016	.009	.015	.043	.029
	+	=	+	+	=	+	-	=	=	+	=	+	=	+	-
6	.009	.004	.121	.016	.064	.202	.436	.000	.000	.004	.019	.006	.013	.050	.056
	+	=	+	+	=	+	-	=	=	+	=	+	=	+	-
7	.003	.005	.081	.015	.043	.166	.503	.000	.000	.002	.014	.005	.005	.069	.090
	+	+	+	+	=	+	-	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	-
8	.007	.005	.084	.007	.030	.138	.551	.000	.000	.003	.013	.005	.005	.053	.100
	+	+	+	+	=	+	-	=	=	+	=	+	=	+	-
9	.000	.000	.060	.003	.036	.116	.575	.000	.000	.002	.012	.000	.010	.055	.132
	=	=		+	+	+	-	=	=	+	=	=	=	+	-
10	.004	.002	.051	.006	.026	.107	.569	.000	.000	.002	.015	.002	.006	.055	.154
	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	=	=	+	+	+	=	+	-
11	.000	.000	.017	.006	.014	.124	.562	.000	.000	.000	.003	.003	.011	.073	.186
	=	=	+	+	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	-
12	.000	.000	.043	.008	.032	.071	.553	.000	.000	.000	.004	.004	.000	.067	.217
	=	=	+	+	+	+	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	-
13	.000	.000	.004	.000	.000	.106	.593	.000	.000	.000	.004	.000	.004	.066	.221
	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	-
14	.000	.000	.011	.005	.011	.074	.601	.000	.000	.011	.005	.000	.000	.048	.234
	=	=	+	+	=	+	=	=	=	+	-	-	=	+	-
15	.000	.000	.007	.000	.000	.062	.568	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.007	.082	.274
	=	=	+	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	-

'+': observed probability significantly greater than expected value ($p < 0.01$)
'-': observed probability significantly less than expected value ($p < 0.01$)
'=': observed and expected probabilities were not significantly different ($p > 0.01$)

than chance would predict. The other two (0110 and 1110) both occurred much more often than chance would predict, one being a career that could be characterized as a nonviolent/nonstatus career with the other being a nonstatus career.

These patterns of differences between expected and observed probabilities point to the conclusion that youth tend to specialize more than predicted by a pure independent joint probability model of delinquent behavior. In short careers this specialization is seen in careers containing only one offense type. In longer careers, the specialization is found in the restricted ranges of offense mixes within the careers. Added to this is a pattern which indicates a tendency for youth with status offense referrals to be less involved in delinquent behavior, especially index violent offenses, than were youth without status offenses in their careers.

Conclusions

The structure of court careers indicates that (1) youth were likely to be involved in a wide range of law-violating behavior; (2) specialization within a single offense category was relatively uncommon for youth with three or more referrals; but (3) specialization, either within an individual offense category or especially a limited set of categories, was more common than would be predicted by a pure random chance model of delinquent behavior. Looking only at the overall content of the court careers, it is fair to say that the cafeteria model of delinquent behavior is very predictive of the relative frequencies (the rank order) of the various career types, but it fails to predict the actual proportions of career types within the cohort because it fails to incorporate a level of specialization in law-violating behavior.

Chapter 6

Summary and Conclusions

The juvenile court careers of 69,504 youth were studied to develop an understanding of the prevalence, content, and pattern of juvenile court careers. In part, this work found:

- Approximately one-third of all youth residing within the courts' jurisdictions were referred to juvenile court for a delinquency or status offense before their 18th birthday. More specifically, 46 percent of all males and 21 percent of all females had juvenile court careers.

- The majority of youth referred to court were referred at least once for a delinquency offense (i.e., a criminal law violation). Eighty-one percent of all court careers (85 percent of male careers and 73 percent of female careers) contained a delinquency referral.

- A high percentage of the juvenile court careers included at least one status offense referral (i.e., running away, truancy, curfew violation, incorrigibility, and underage liquor law violations). Overall, 40 percent of the court careers (38 percent of male careers and 42 percent of female careers) contained at least one status offense referral.

- Over half of all youth with a status offense in their career also were referred for a delinquency offense; one-quarter of all youth with a delinquency offense in their career also were referred at some time in their career for a status offense.

- An index violent offense was found in 5 percent of all court careers. However, only a very small percentage of juveniles had more than one index violent offense in their career; 84 percent of juveniles referred to court for an index violent offense were never referred for a second index violent offense.

- A drug offense was found in 11 percent of all juvenile court careers and 19 percent of all juvenile court careers contained an underage liquor law violation.

- More than 7 percent of all youth in the cohort were charged at least once in their careers with running away from home.

- The likelihood that a male would begin a court career increased with age throughout his juvenile years, while the likelihood that a female would begin a court career decreased after the age of 16.

- Fifty-nine percent of all youth referred to juvenile court were referred only once; 54 percent of males and 71 percent of females referred to court for the first time never returned.

- First offenders who were most likely to be subsequently charged with an index violent offense were those charged with robbery, arson, aggravated assault, and burglary. First offenders least likely to be charged with a subsequent index violent offense were those charged with status liquor law violations, public order violations, truancy, drug law violations, and shoplifting.

- Sixteen percent of all youth referred to court, those with four or more referrals, were responsible for over half of all juvenile court cases.

- The probability that a youth would recidivate was related to both the age at referral and the number of prior referrals in the career. Youth referred to court for a second time before age 16 recidivated at a rate commonly attributed to a chronic or persistent offender.

- Compared to youth who began their careers at an older age, youth with earlier ages of onset tended to have more referrals in their careers and these careers were more likely to contain an index violent referral.

- As the number of referrals in a career increased, the youth was more likely to be referred for an index violent offense.

- Youth referred for an index violent offense were very likely to be generalists. That is, they were involved in a wide range of law-violating behavior over their court careers.

- True specialization was very uncommon, but some specialization, either within a single offense category or within a limited set of offense categories, was more common than predicted by a random behavior model.

Juvenile courts have the opportunity of intervening in the lives of a large percentage of youth at a time when problems are apparent and with the authority to affect change. The finding of developmental offense patterns in court careers supports the search for indicators of future law-violating behavior (e.g., risk-screening instruments). If these indicators could be identified, programs could be developed to concentrate specialized resources on the youth most in need of these services very early in the court career. Most importantly, the finding that a youth referred to court for a second time could, with a high degree of certainty, be considered a chronic offender implies that the courts should not wait until a youth has returned a fourth of fifth time before taking strong action. Most of these youth will cycle through the dispositional alternatives, consuming more and more court resources. Greater expenditures earlier in a career should have more impact on these younger youth, should reduce future court workloads, and should provide greater protection to the community.

Epilogue

For researchers and court personnel, it is hoped that this study can serve as an example of the research potential of the data found in the automated information systems of juvenile courts across the country. These data are developed primarily to serve the operational needs of the modern juvenile court. The research potential of such information resources are largely untapped. With proper handling juvenile court data sets can address important issues and research questions and, through this work, can increase the effectiveness of our juvenile courts.

APPENDIX

Recoding of Maricopa County's Offense Codes into Reporting Codes

Murder & non-negligent manslaughter
- Homicide, general
- Manslaughter
- Murder, first degree
- Murder, second degree

Forcible rape
- Rape

Robbery
- Aggravated robbery
- Purse snatching, forcible
- Robbery with weapon
- Robbery, general
- Robbery, strong arm

Aggravated assault
- Aggravated assault
- Assault, aggravated deadly weapon

Burglary
- Burglary, general
- Burglary, first degree
- Burglary, second degree
- Commercial burglary

Larceny-theft
- Burglary from auto
- Burglary from coin operated machine
- Larceny from mails
- Larceny, bicycle
- Larceny, grand or petty, general
- Larceny, grand theft
- Larceny, petty theft
- Larceny, petty theft from automobile
- Purse snatching, no force
- Theft from a person
- Theft of credit card
- Theft with firearm
- Theft, $100 or more

Shoplifting
- Shoplifting

Motor vehicle theft
- Grand theft auto
- Unauthorized use of vehicle, joyride

Arson

- Arson, general
- Arson, nonstructural
- Arson, structural
- Arson, unoccupied structure

Simple assault

- Assault and battery, general
- Assault, simple
- Endangerment
- Intimidation
- Resist an officer

Sexual offenses against persons

- Child molesting
- Rape, statutory, no force
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual assault, general
- Sodomy with minor

Kidnapping

- Custodial interference
- Kidnap for sexual assault
- Kidnapping

Vandalism

- Criminal damage, $1,000 or more
- Criminal damage, $1,500 or more
- Criminal damage, over $10,000
- Criminal damage, petty
- Damage property, general
- Malicious mischief
- Vandalism

Possession of stolen property

- Burglary tools, possess
- Stolen property, possess
- Stolen property, sell
- Stolen vehicle, possess
- Trafficking in stolen property, first
- Trafficking in stolen property, second

Fraud, forgery and embezzlement

- Extortion, general
- Forgery of checks
- Forgery, counterfeiting, general
- Fraud, general
- Fraud, use of credit cards
- Fraudulent schemes

Trespassing

- Criminal tresspass, fenced yard
- Criminal tresspass, residence
- Criminal tresspass, second degree
- Criminal tresspass, third degree
- Invasion of privacy
- Trespassing, other

Drugs

- Dangerous drugs, narcotics, general
- Dangerous drugs, other
- Dangerous drugs, possess
- Dangerous drugs, sell
- Hallucinogen, other
- Marijuana, other
- Marijuana, possess
- Marijuana, sell
- Sniffing, glue
- Sniffing, paint
- Sniffing, substance unknown

Weapons

- Fireworks, use illegally
- Weapon, other, use illegally
- Weapon, use illegally
- Weapons misconduct

Indecent exposure

- Indecent exposure
- Lewd and lacivious acts
- Public sexual indecency

Prostitution

- Prostitution
- Prostitution, procure for
- Sex, commercialized, general

Disorderly conduct

- Disorderly conduct
- Disturbing the peace
- Drinking from open container
- Drunkenness from vapors, drugs, not alcohol
- Drunkenness, general
- Interference, schools
- Liquor, general
- Loitering
- Loitering, drugs
- Public peace, general
- Riot
- Telephone, use unlawfully
- Unlawful assembly
- Vulgar obscene language

Obstruction of police
- Give false report
- Hindering prosecution, first degree
- Hindering prosecution, second degree
- Obstruct criminal investigation
- Obstruct, destroying evidence
- Obstructing police, general

Obstruction of judiciary
- Contempt of court
- Influencing a witness
- Interfering with judicial proceedings
- Obstructing judiciary, general
- Perjury
- Probation violation

Escape
- Escape from institution
- Escape from institution, second degree
- Escape from institution, third degree
- Flight to avoid, court, placement
- Flight, escape, general

Delinquent traffic
- Driving under the influence of liquor
- Leave accident with death or injury
- Manslaughter, negligent vehicle
- Reckless driving, no intoxication

Other public order offenses
- Conservation, animals, cruelty
- Conservation, general

Running away
- Runaway, within county
- Runaway, outside county

Truancy
- Truancy, habitually from school

Incorrigiblity
- Incorrigible, refuse to obey parent/guardian

Status liquor offenses
- Liquor, misrepresent age in purchase
- Liquor, possess unlawfully

Curfew violation
- Violation of curfew

Recoding of Utah's Offense Codes into Reporting Codes

Murder & non-negligent manslaughter
- Murder - first degree
- Murder - second degree
- Manslaughter

Forcible rape
- Aggravated sexual assault
- Forcible sodomy victim over 14
- Forcible sodomy victim under 14
- Rape of a person under 14 yrs
- Rape, victim 14 or over

Robbery
- Aggravated robbery 1st degree felony
- Robbery 2nd degree felony

Aggravated assault
- Aggravated assault
- Aggravated assault by prisoner
- Assault by prisoner
- Assault of peace officer
- Intentional child assault
- Negligent child assault
- Negligent child assault, injury

Burglary
- Aggravated burglary, armed
- Aggravated burglary, threat or causes injury
- Burglary, dwelling, second degree
- Burglary, non-dwelling, third degree

Larceny-theft
- Bike theft, 3rd degree felony
- Bike theft, class A misdemeanor
- Bike theft, class B misdemeanor
- Burglary of vehicle
- Gas theft, $100-$250, class A misdemeanor
- Gas theft, $250-$1000, 3rd degree
- Gas theft, under $100, class B misdemeanor
- Theft of gas
- Theft of mail
- Theft, $100 or less, class B misdemeanor
- Theft, $101-$250, class A misdemeanor
- Theft, $251-$1000, 3rd degree felony
- Theft, over $1000, 2nd degree felony

Shoplifting

- Shoplift, $251-$1000, 3rd degree felony
- Shoplift, $101-$250, class A misdemeanor
- Shoplift, $100 or less, class B misdemeanor

Motor vehicle theft

- Car theft, 2nd degree felony
- Joyride, driver returns under 24 hours
- Joyriding accomplice
- Motor bike theft, 3rd degree felony

Arson

- Aggravated arson
- Arson, burning fields
- Arson-damage $250 or less
- Arson-value exceeds $5,000

Simple assault

- Assault
- Assault, fight by mutual consent with no harm
- Attempt 1st degree felony person
- Attempt 2nd degree felony person
- Attempt 3rd degree felony person
- Injury by vicious animal
- Telephone harassment
- Threat

Sexual offenses against persons

- Forcible sexual abuse
- Incest
- Sex with one under 16 & 3 years younger than offender

Kidnapping

- Aggravated kidnapping, victim not released
- Aggravated kidnapping, victim released
- Custodial interference
- Unlawful detention

Vandalism

- Damage to place of confinement
- Damaging a road sign
- Destruction of property
- Destruction of property under $250
- Destruction of property, $250 to $499
- Destruction of property, $500 to $1000
- Destruction of property, criminal mischief
- Destruction of property, over $1,000
- Destruction of property, public utility
- Malicious damage to schools
- Propelling object at vehicle, over $250
- Propelling object at vehicle, under $250

Possession of stolen property

- Obtain lost, mis-laid property, $100-$250
- Possession of burglary tools
- Possession of forgery device
- Receive stolen property $100-$250
- Receive stolen property $250-$1000
- Receive stolen property over $1000
- Receiving stolen property, motor vehicle
- Receiving stolen property
- Receiving stolen property under $100
- Transporting stolen vehicle

Fraud, forgery and embezzlement

- Extorting victim of crime
- Extortion, $101-$250, person
- Forgery
- Forgery felony
- Forgery misdemeanor
- Forgery of $100 or more
- Forgery, check, less than $100
- Fraud of value over $50
- Fraudulent credit card, $100 or under
- Fraudulent credit card, $101-$250
- Fraudulent credit card, $251-$1,000
- Fraudulent handling records, writings
- Issuing a bad check, over $1,000
- Issuing a bad check, under $100
- Theft by deception, class B misdemeanor

Trespassing

- Criminal trespass
- Trespass with a vehicle

Drugs

- Distribute for value-narcotic
- Distribute schedule IV non-narcotic for value
- Distributing marijuana-no value
- Drug dealing
- Drug possession or use
- Drug possession with intent to sell
- Marijuana possession or use
- Marijuana sale
- Narcotic possession
- Possession of a non-narcotic drug
- Possession of psychotoxic chemical
- Present where marijuana used
- Producing [growing] marijuana
- Sniffing glue or psychotoxic chemical
- Substance abuse

Weapons

- Bomb possession or construction
- Carrying a concealed weapon
- Carrying loaded firearm, vehicle
- Concealed weapon, not firearm
- Exhibiting a dangerous weapon
- Possession of dangerous weapon
- Possession of dangerous weapon to assault
- Possession of weapon
- Shooting from a vehicle
- Shooting in restricted area
- Using a dangerous weapon

Indecent exposure

- Indecent acts

Prostitution

- Offering sex acts for hire
- Patronizing a prostitute

Disorderly conduct

- Disorderly conduct
- Disorderly conduct to annoy another
- Disorderly conduct, fighting continues
- Disorderly conduct, fighting, desists
- Disorderly conduct, fighting, loud noise
- Disorderly conduct, foul, abuse language
- Disorderly conduct, hazardous condition continues
- Disorderly conduct, noise in public place
- Failure to disperse
- Fighting
- Foul language
- Loitering
- Public intoxication
- Unreasonable noise - public place

Obstruction of police

- Altering evidence
- Flee police officer, over 90 mph or out of state
- Interfere with arrest
- Resisting arrest

Obstruction of judiciary

- Contempt
- Contempt, non-pecuniary order
- Contempt, pecuniary order
- Destroy, alter, conceal evidence
- Obstructing justice
- Obstructing justice, capital or 1st degree felony
- Tampering with witness
- Technical parole violation

Escape

- Aiding in an escape
- Conceal escape from youth custody
- Escape from custody
- Escape from custody, force
- Youth in agency custody runs away again

Delinquent traffic

- Driving under influence of alcohol
- Fleeing a police officer, no damage or injury
- Leaving accident scene, damages
- Leaving accident scene, injuries
- Negligent homicide

Other public order offenses

- Boating violation
- Conspiracy - capital felony
- Conspiracy, class A misdemeanor, public order
- Conspiracy, class B misdemeanor, public order
- Cruelty to animals
- False id, name, address only
- False report
- False report, false alarm
- Falsely reporting an offense
- Fireworks, use, possession, sale
- Fish & game violation
- Harass, written threat
- Killing an animal illegally
- Littering
- Misuse of recreational vehicle
- Parks and recreation offense
- Possession of drug paraphenela
- School interference
- Smoking in a public place
- Suborning
- Supplying alcohol to minors
- Tampering with mail boxes
- Terroristic threat, emergency
- Terroristic threat, fear bodily injury
- Terroristic threat, prevent occupancy
- Threatening a public servant or voter

Running away

- Runaway
- Runaway, out of state youth
- Runaway of Utah resident

Truancy

- Habitual truancy

Incorrigiblity
- Other-status
- Possession of tobacco
- Ungovernable Utah youth

Status liquor offenses
- Alcohol possession
- Minor in tavern

Curfew violation
- Curfew

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